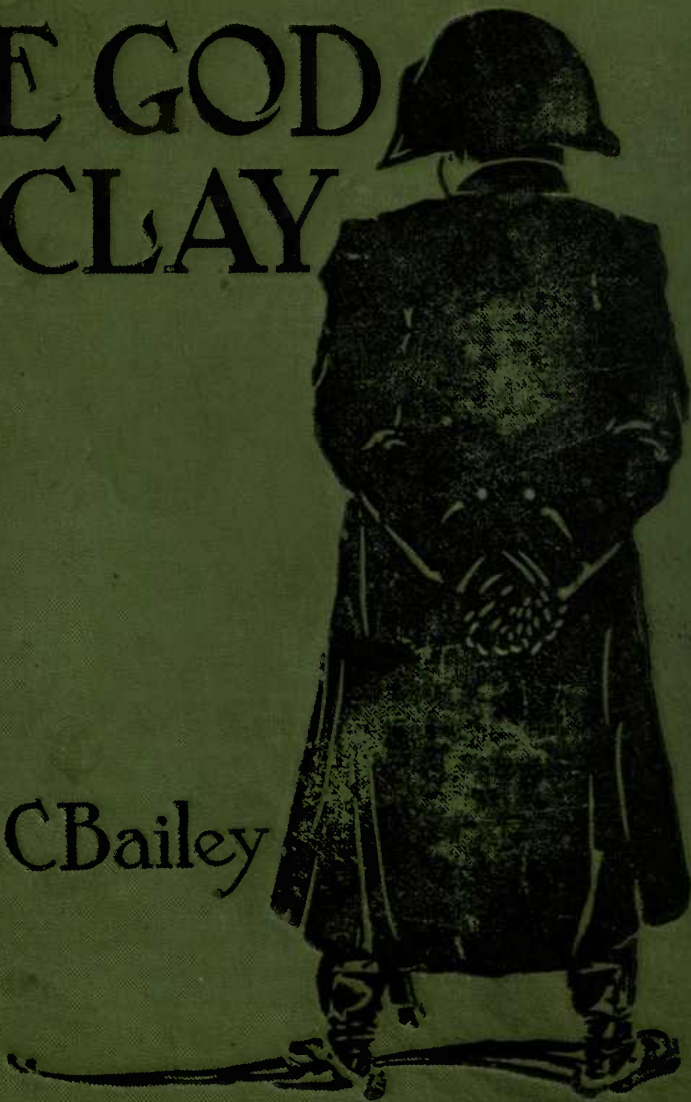


# THE GOD *of* CLAY

*by* H C Bailey



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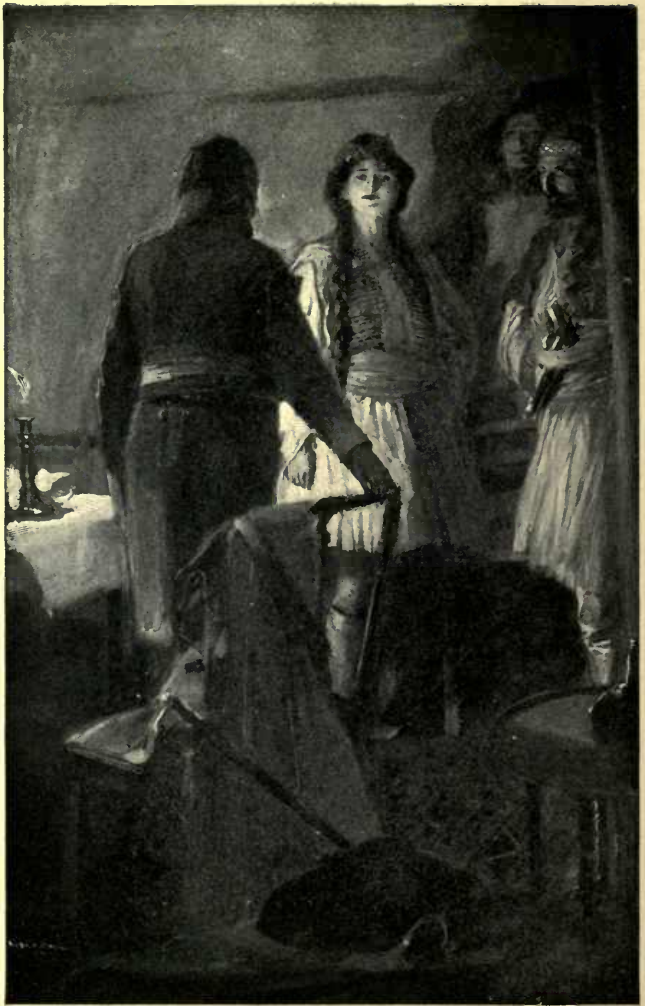


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THE GOD OF CLAY







They Brought Back a Girl Dressed Like Her Father,  
in Short Full Kilts



# The God of Clay

BY

H. C. BAILEY

With Illustrations by

ALEC C. BALL

New York  
BRENTANO'S  
1908

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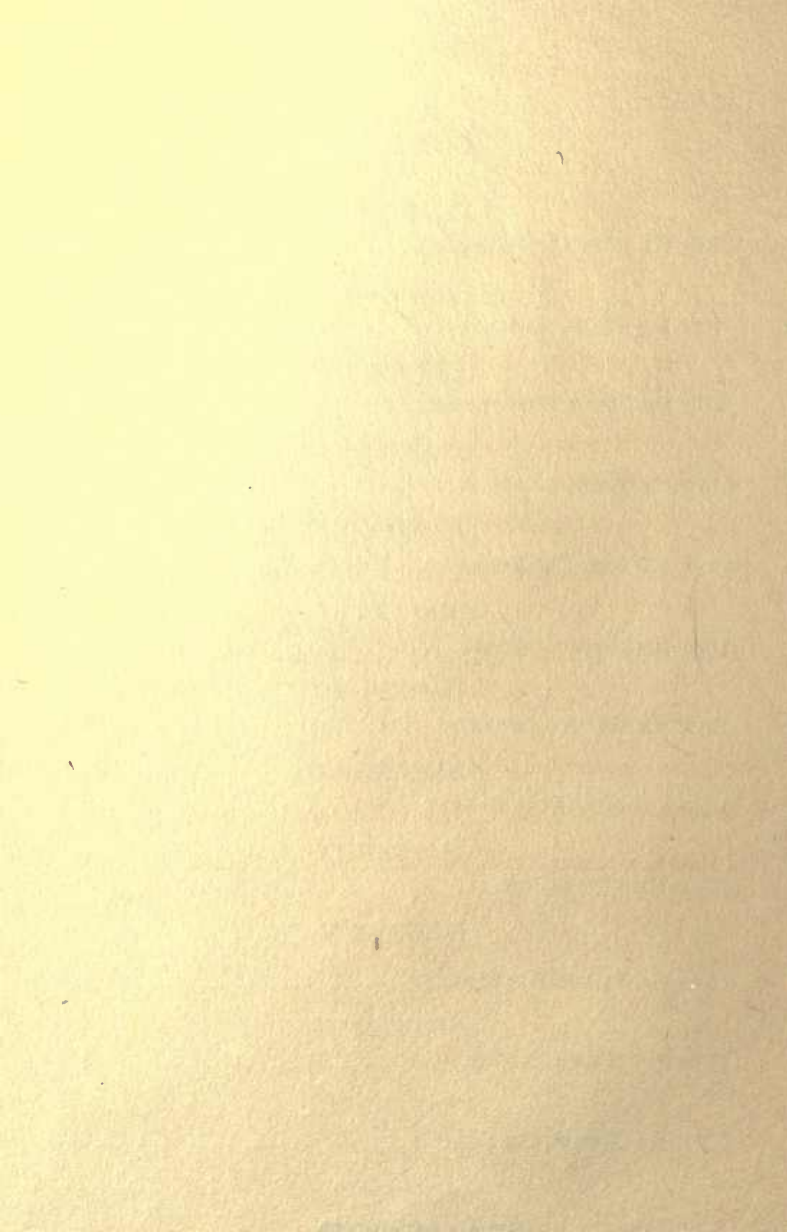
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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
HOW HE FOUGHT FOR SOULS.....	21
CHAPTER II	
HOW HE CHOSE LIFE.....	47
CHAPTER III	
HOW HE MET A MIDSHIPMAN .....	75
CHAPTER IV	
HOW HE SOUGHT LOVE.....	106
CHAPTER V	
HOW HE SAW HIS STAR .....	138
CHAPTER VI	
HOW HE LOVED CHILDREN.....	174
CHAPTER VII	
HOW HE MET AN IRISHMAN .....	204
CHAPTER VIII	
HOW A WOMAN PLAYED WITH HIM.....	233
CHAPTER IX	
HOW HE MET A JEW.....	256
CHAPTER X	
HOW HE FAILED HIS FORTUNE.....	288
CHAPTER XI	
HOW HE WON HIS THRONE.....	319
CHAPTER XII	
HOW HE CAME TO THE SEA.....	348



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
They Brought Back a Girl Dressed Like Her Father, in Short Full Kilts .....	<i>Frontispiece</i> 299
Bonaparte Stumbled Through the Throng, a Strange Grim Little Figure .....	58
In the Doorway Stood the Citizen Representative Salicetti..	89
The Crowd Withstood and Struck Back with Clubs and Pikes and Knives.....	133
“Soldiers of France, Forward!” Then They Roared at Him, and a Storm of Tattered Shakoos Went Tossing to the Sky.....	169
He Came Forward and Bent Over Her.....	255
“Very Well,” said David Stein, and Knocked Him Down....	279
“I Hate Compliments with Thorns,” Josephine Pouted.....	320



## NOTE

*The men and women of whom I tell lived through the storm in which the old world passed: the Revolution that brought France liberty and the Terror and Napoleon. You know how the spirit of man, long cheated and chained, broke fiercely forth and swept the old tyrant powers away, and made France a clean land where free men could live; how, in the first of its strength, this new world force, half divine and all human, turned away from things as they are and gave ear to the pretty stories of sentimentalists and logicians, Marat and Robespierre and St. Just, till it was driven mad and wrought reasonless, ghastly havoc, till the glorious vision, a nation of free men and friends, ended in blood-smirched chaos. Then out of the chaos men cried, as ever men will, for order and law, whatever the cost. And there came Napoleon—the brain of a god and a mean man's heart. He brought them order. He wrought Frenchmen into such a weapon for mankind's conquest as the world had never known. He wielded it with a greedy, ruthless skill that dazzles and dazes yet. Never in any man else has dwelt such force as his. Of him, of men and women who loved him sometimes, I write here; how their lives crossed and clashed under the fool's tyranny of old France, amid the rushing, murderous, mad pageant of the Terror, and again, and yet again, when Napoleon had won power and glory and worship and hate and pity. Will you say which he most deserved?*





## INTRODUCTION

To choose for the hero of your historical novel a historical man is not the classic way. In the great exemplars the burden and the heat of the story are borne by creatures of the imagination, and it is only through the medium of their ingeniously adventurous lives that we are permitted to see the actual men whose blunders and whose labours made the world we use. This may be the best, as it is certainly the easiest scheme, but there are others not to be condemned by lynch law. Catholic critics stand by the sentence of a master of the craft, that no literary form is in itself bad if its intentions are virtuous. He who seeks to make a man of history dominant in a landscape of romance is not, therefore, a blatant sinner against the holy covenant of art.

He does indeed multiply difficulties and responsibilities. No historical novel, as I conceive, is justified unless it is an honest and vivid picture of its period. A light that never was on sea or land may be very gorgeous, but is not sufficient illumination. A romance *in vacuo* may be a very good thing, but it is something different from a historical novel. Even a picture, however vivid and however honest, is not enough. We have a right to ask that the spirit of the time should be made real: that the yearning passion of the world's springtime should throb again through a story of the Renaissance, that the stern faith of the Puritans should dignify a tale of their triumph or their defeat. But

beyond this an author may, if he chooses, be free from the bonds of fact. He will be wise, indeed, not to commit gross outrages upon history. We could not tolerate Cœur de Lion in the guise of a poltroon, but "Ivanhoe" is not less a masterpiece for giving us a portrait quite unlike the real, extortionate, Frenchified king. We should sneer at the Old Pretender painted a Puritan, but "Esmond" is none the worse for a plot which makes that respectable and unfortunate prince behave in a way which would have filled him with horror. But when a writer makes an actual man the hero of his book, he must, as I think, cut himself off from all these liberties. The primary obligation of an honest presentment of the material and spiritual life of the time remains: he adds to that a harder task. He is bound by every law of morality and of art to spare no pains in making a right judgment of the man whose joys and whose sorrows he presumes to use, and to work with all his heart and soul at telling the truth so that the truth may live.

But this, it may be said, is the work of the historian. Only in part, I think. "Imaginative literature has a higher truth and a deeper seriousness than history." Truth does not consist in a record of what has happened. One short story may tell more of a man's soul than a library full of chronicles of his deeds. Gathering from a thousand sources of evidence of a man's life, judging him not with eager admiration, not with prejudiced hate, but with the generosity each man would ask for himself and the honesty no man would wish to shun, so it may be possible to call up in one's mind something more like the real Napoleon than the simulacrum which friends and foes saw dimly through

the passion and strife of the whirling hours. Telling of fact where fact seemed to express what he was, shunning it where it hides the real man, imagining men and women whose act and passion cast light on his greatness and his tragedy, and dropping the pen when it seeks romantic emotion in something that would make Napoléon what he could never have been, so it may be possible to tell as truly of the man as historians have told of the strategist and the statesman. I have tried to do it in this book.

It will be clear enough that I make as little pretence to tell only what happened as to tell all that happened. Those are the obligations of the historian and the biographer. Mine, as I conceive, is to tell what ought to have happened. When the order of events threw a clear light upon the real Napoléon I have been no more than a chronicler. When the record of fact would have been a cloud of darkness I have made without a scruple a chronicle of romance: only I have been careful that no temptation of romance should turn the man into something other than I found him. Where precisely fiction ends and fact begins I myself should often find it hard to say. Some kindly critics who have viewed this book while it was being built have doubted incidents for which there is invincible evidence, and accepted with satisfaction others which never happened out of the beautiful world where all is ruled by the logic of art. I am content if it be found that all work together to make a harmonious drama of the real man.

And what was the real man? It is a question which no one who has studied him will answer hastily. Some popular portraits may indeed be banished at once. He was as little the ogre that English and French Tories

have painted as the god-born liberator of Europe whom English Radicals and la Grande Armée tried hard to believe in. That blasphemy against humanity which called him the greatest man since Jesus Christ is as little like truth as the supercilious declaration that he was a mere brigand.

*He captured many thousand guns;  
He wrote 'The Great' before his name,  
And dying only left his sons  
The recollection of his shame.*

So says Thackeray, only to be compelled to confess upon another page the tremendous vitality of French faith in his work. He was a tyrant, Michelet cries, a sinister *démon de guerre*: and brands him the one man in Europe who had the heart to laugh when the three hundred thousand men of the Grande Armée found their tomb in the Russian snow: in a few sentences more comes the admission that the Army of Waterloo could see no fault in their leader. What is the explanation? He was so astute, says Michelet. Is it credible? Could any brain so dupe a nation for so long? Again, the question is not to be hastily answered. The common standards have no relation here. Saints and martyrs have been drunk with God and the passion of their faith still staggers the imagination of men. Napoléon was drunk with self, and in their madness that terrible will, that mighty machine of brain might well do wild work. For my part I shrink from setting bounds to his power to dupe and beguile and enchant. I believe that he could impose upon a nation. For he imposed upon himself. "The man was given up to

strong delusion that he should believe a lie': a fearful but most sure thing. He did not know true from false now when he looked at them—the fearfulest penalty a man pays for yielding to untruth of heart. Self and false ambition had now become his god: self-deception once yielded to, all other deceptions follow naturally more and more." Remember that consecration by the Pope: "‘wanting nothing to complete the pomp of it,’ as Augereau said, ‘nothing but the half million of men who had died to put an end to all that.’" The worst lie—Plato had foreseen him as well as a thousand other heroes and philosophers who conceive themselves new—the worst lie is the lie in the soul.

But the magnificent charlatan, as Carlyle knew well enough, is not the only Napoleon. Most of the clashing judgments, the passionate devotees and the vehement foes owe their birth to the changing phases of the man and his work. The shabby lieutenant of La Fère had other ideals than the brigadier of the whiff of grapeshot. The general of the army of Italy was of finer faith than the First Consul. The lover who was all fire in Josephine's feeble, frightened arms was scarred and atrophied of soul before he pounced saturnine on that useless prey, Marie Louise. People make an idol or a bogey of him: he is the omnipotent war god: he is Prometheus chained upon the rocks of St. Helena: he is the fallen angel of brute strength: he is any creature of legend that you please except a man who followed the fashion of men and grew. He was a man. It would seem childish affectation to reiterate that but for the abundant literature of those who think him a being of another creation. He had a brain and a will of rare power, but not of a nature different

from the common endowment of men. Those qualities of mind which throughout the ages men have agreed to hold in the highest honour, which seem like the working of the very spirit of God: the prophetic vision, the architectonic thought, the impulse that spurs mankind to new achievement, these you will not find in Napoleon. His gift to our inheritance is not merely less than that we owe to Themistocles or Alexander or the great Caius Julius. His work ranks below the work of smaller men. William the Silent and William of Orange left more behind them of all that endures, except glory. In his own day Stein built a nobler monument of statesmanship than anything which came from the hands of Napoleon. But the most interesting comparison of all, as I have tried to hint (I could do no more in a novel), is with Washington. We need not argue as to which had the finer endowment. By their works they are known. Both were men of a revolution. Washington guarded his country's weakest hours and when he stepped aside left her strong and fearless. The first desperate fight of the French Republic was won without Napoléon. She was free, she had beaten back the arms of all Europe, before he snatched the sceptre. He left her crushed in helpless defeat to be the prey of the Holy Alliance and a stupid Bourbon tyranny. The Revolution gave France heart and arm to defy the world. Napoléon left her weaker than centuries of the old regime. He came not to fulfil, but to destroy. The work of the destroyer has indeed its claim to gratitude and honour. He swept out of Europe a host of horrors born of the dark ages of tyranny, but still in strength. Where his eagles came, the ghastly gods of persecution and serfdom could not

live. They linger yet only in those nations which never came within his grip. But all that he tried to build upon their ruin crumbled to dust in an hour. His name stands for no principle, for no cause worth a man's life or death. Napoleonism is a legend, not a system. It commands nothing better than the devotion of sentimental souls who in a comfortable suburb glorify the gospel of blood and iron and are much annoyed when reminded of their likeness to the other humourless people who make societies for the maintenance of true Jacobite principles and the honour of the Stuart line. Indeed, "his love and his hatred and his envy is now perished: neither has he any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun." Never was there such a grim contrast between the glory of life and the scanty relics which the inexorable fires of death leave unconsumed. Why is it? Some people say with a sneer that after all he was really quite a little man. *Bien loin que son succès fût un miracle, le miracle eût été qu'avec de telles circonstances il ne réussît pas.* He never met a brain before Waterloo: his army made him: Masséna did this and Augereau did that: Lannes and Davoust were as great as he and without Berthier he was nothing. So the tales run. I profess I cannot see him so. Doubtless, fortune was kind: doubtless, he was well served. But the man is resolute in a cheating theory who will not feel the rare wonder of that acute, accurate, ingenious brain and the terrible force of his will. The utter failure of all is the darker puzzle.

The old Duke of Weimar, they say, even when the thunderbolt of Jena had laid Germany at the conqueror's feet, bade his friends be of courage, for Napoléon could not last. It may have been obstinate

faith in the old order: but the man who understood Goethe and the man whom Goethe honoured may have had a nobler assurance. There were eyes perhaps that could face undazzled the keenest glare of the meteor light of conquest and see behind the steel strength of that great brow a common man of mean passions and mean ideals. That is the real tragedy of Napoleon. He is the most awful vision in all history of the ruin wrought for a man's self and all his world by the wedding of a great brain to an ignoble heart. I suppose no one who likes to believe in men ever read his story without searching eagerly for some gleam of generous passion, some kindly breath of that magnanimity which makes one so remote from our life as Cæsar still honoured and loved. And the quest ends in disgust if not contempt. Yet something there is, and because it is something which the historian's canons of evidence will hardly admit, the way of romance may tell Napoleon's story best.

The child of a despised and outcast family, his boyhood was a long torture. At the Ecole Militaire he ranked a pauper among the rich, a plebeian among the *noblesse*. Such a fate is harsh enough in the age of democracy: it needs little imagination to feel the sordid misery of it under the old régime. That he should have gone out into the world with any high ideals of manhood would have been a miracle. The earthquake of Revolution found him afire with greed to subdue all things unto him to prove upon the souls of mankind that he was no creature for scorn. Is it matter for wonder or blame? Many an unhappy lad has felt such wild passions surge in him. Napoleon had the power to feed them fat. In the first best years



of his manhood a nobler vision checked and swayed his strength. He too felt the power of that ideal towards which the world works yet: nations of freemen and friends. He too could hold that creed of the divine right of every man to make the best of himself. If fate had been kindlier all his conquering power might have been spent to convert the world to that—with what high issue we can only dream. Life cheated him and he was revenged on life. But in those years that ordered his nature, the hungry soul was throbbing with another need. He was always very man of very man, and in him most keenly moved the desire to weld a soul upon his soul. You find him writing with bitter envy of the respectable brother who had the luck to find a modest mediocrity of a girl in love with him. Some one, we know, there was at Valence who might have been as kind. He was condemned to love Josephine. It is idle, perhaps, to let fancy build another life for him. No one to whom he is but a living man with the yearnings and sorrows of common men will not wish to linger for a moment in thought of what might have been if Josephine de Beauharnais had been a woman worth a man's love, with the strength that multiplies strength, the passion that ennobles passion, the honour that makes honour bright, and the love that makes men labour for all things worthy of love. . . .

We come back to reality, to a fair, feeble woman who could like all the world and love none. He puzzled her sadly. "His violent tenderness," she complains, "amounts almost to frenzy." No doubt she found it very disagreeable. "I am far from you," he writes, "I seem to be surrounded by the blackest night." She came to his side all in tears for leaving the sweet joys of Paris.

She failed him utterly. There is no need to spend zeal in arraigning her. She gave him all she had. But when he knew how little it was, when he found life cheating him of its dearest gift, all the noble passion in him atrophied and the greed of conquest was his sole guide to the end. With him, as with every man who has yielded to it in all the ages, it led to torment and ruin and oblivion.

I have tried to tell the story without worship and without hate. What the just sentence may be on a man of power so great, stricken and distorted by wounds so cruel, tried by so fierce a storm, weaker men, happier men cannot easily guess. After a long time that I have laboured to see and know all the meanings of all that he did, to feel the passions that inspired him and the loss and shame that smote at his heart, he fades from my sight while I wonder still at his strength, and wonder is blent with a great regret.

H. C. BAILEY.

THE GOD OF CLAY



# The God of Clay

## CHAPTER I

### HOW HE FOUGHT FOR SOULS

SOME people think that with common luck he might have been a respectable person. I like to draw for myself a M. Napoleon Bonaparte living the life of a grocer of repute: an excellent, obedient father and husband, drowsily content, the ideal of matrons. He was, as you know, less fortunate. But he began most respectably.

Lieutenant Napoleon Bonaparte of the artillery regiment La Fère passed his days in the observance of every duty, and was naturally beloved of his brother-officers.

In the summer of 1788 a half-score of these good gentlemen were lounging up the main street of Valence. Lieutenant Bonaparte—no other man's uniform was ever so dingy, so threadbare, or so neat—came by holding a hand of his little brother Louis. One of the gentlemen stifled a yawn to bet where the next darn would be in Lieutenant Bonaparte's breeches. And other like jokes followed. And the good gentlemen vibrated with laughter. Louis the small boy flushed.

But Lieutenant Bonaparte had learnt to be deaf and blind.

From the amused gentlemen one, larger, leaner, fairer than Frenchmen are wont to be, detached himself and gravely saluted Bonaparte. This lonely person was a mere guest of the regiment, an American soldier. Colonel Vassary is known as a friend of Washington, but he was always more human than that sounds. He fought for America till America was free. Then on an errand of his own (whereof if Heaven and you so please you may some day hear) he came to France. What matters now is that he was at Valence in that pregnant summer, and he observed Lieutenant Bonaparte, this man who was Washington's friend.

So the officers of the regiment La Fère gaped upon Colonel Vassary, and Lieutenant Bonaparte answered the salute and led his small boy on. You see the brothers climbing the vineyard hills toward Sirac.

Louis the small boy matters little. He was only a small boy all his life. Lieutenant Bonaparte makes no more than a small, lean, mean form topped by a huge head. But for the head, that huge neckless head, you would scarcely be sure that you saw him. The great dome of brown forehead, the jutting bones of nose and cheek and chin, compel gaze and thought; the boundless greed and force of it all challenge your soul, and that trenchant gleam of grey steel from deep beneath the brain makes you fear he will conquer.

Lieutenant Bonaparte sat down with his small boy beside a vineyard lane. All air and sky were lucid in the early glory of a summer day, and the full grapes

blushed in the sun and the quick breeze was gay with their breath. Lieutenant Bonaparte brought out a tiny worn book, and Louis the small boy fidgeted. "I do not like this place, Napoléon," he complained. "Why do you always come to this place?"

"I hope," said Lieutenant Bonaparte severely, "that you will know your catechism to-day."

Louis, fidgeting still, was careful not to see his brother's eyes. "I think," he declared, "that you come to look at that woman. I do not like that woman."

Lieutenant Bonaparte took the small boy by the ear and turned him round. Louis met the grey glitter from under the huge brow, and shivered, and was still. "Who made you?" quoth Lieutenant Bonaparte; and Louis began his catechism in a hurry.

It progressed brilliantly till Lieutenant Bonaparte was moved to look down the lane. As he turned, "How do you prove that there is a Purgatory?" he asked.

"Oh! that is a very long one," Louis grumbled.

Lieutenant Bonaparte was turning again in the cause of devout instruction when a jolly song came through the vines:

*Robinet et Mariette*

*Vivent en grande union*

*Ils s'aiment à la franquette—*

"It is Jean Dortan—my good Jean Dortan!" cried Louis, and ran away from his catechism.

Through the vines came a square fellow, his knotted neck and arms brown in the sunlight. "Ha! little one," said he, as he tossed Louis aloft, and set him down

again. "Salute, my lieutenant!" And he stood drinking huge draughts of the air.

"Why, Jean, do you leave the forge of mornings?"

"The forge belongs to me, not I to the forge. And I—I must have the sun and the wind. I would go without bread or a shirt sooner than miss the wind blowing through sunshine."

Lieutenant Bonaparte considered Jean Dortan gravely as a new idea, till his attention was withdrawn by a joyous barking. He beheld two noble wolfhounds rollicking wildly, and smiled upon them for the sake of their mistress.

Glorious in the glorious sunlight a woman was coming down the vineyard lane, a woman beautiful in strength, with the form and gait of the queen of life. There was the force of life in her deep bosom, in the lithe swing of body and limb. Cream-white against the sunshine she moved, a challenge to the hearts of men. Beside her, a little behind her, came one who made her a goodly comrade, a man tall as she, with the easy poise of power and a light, gay step.

But Jean Dortan was not gratified. "Aristocrats!" he muttered. "Ah! they are like wasps, they are like the blight."

Lieutenant Bonaparte turned a little. "A beautiful blight at least, Jean."

"How can they be beautiful when they are no use?" Jean growled. "*Peste!* No. They are like their own dogs. See!" The two splendid dogs were plunging in wanton delight across and over the vines, and working wild havoc.



Lieutenant Bonaparte looked and frowned. Among his passions a hatred of waste was ever ready. "She might check the brutes," he confessed.

"She? Bah! she is as they are. She lives only to waste what good men make. And the grapes are a poor man's all, who starves that she may live fat. She——"

Lieutenant Bonaparte had ceased to listen. For the woman was close upon them. He could see her quick, passionate lips, the dark glow of her eyes. Lieutenant Bonaparte started up. "Ah, Mademoiselle de Sirac!" he cried.

Mademoiselle de Sirac, who knew him well—too well for the peace of her heart—declined to know him. Something she had doubtless heard of the growlings of Jean Dortan—who was growling still. She gave the smiling Lieutenant Bonaparte a proud stare and turned to her companion. "Who is this person, Denis?" she inquired.

Denis de Sirac, her companion, sneered at Lieutenant Bonaparte. "Some person of little breeding," said he with a shrug.

"Little! Oh yes, little every way." Mademoiselle de Sirac laughed down upon the small Lieutenant Bonaparte, who amused her further by flushing. "And how long have the King's officers been friends of peasants, Denis?"

"Since they made peasants into officers of the King," Denis sneered.

Mademoiselle de Sirac laughed again. Her dogs came rushing up, and one, jumping clumsily at her hand, knocked down her dog-whip. Lieutenant Bonaparte offered it her again with grave politeness. She

drew away. "I am not used to take things from peasants—or their friends. You may remember that, yes, and you may remember me—by my whip." Laughing in the pride of her lovely strength, she swept away. Lieutenant Bonaparte was left looking at her whip.

"Proud? Oh yes, the devil was proud!" Jean Dortan muttered.

Louis the small boy looked curiously at his brother's flushed face. "Napoleon, that woman is not afraid of you," he said, amazed.

Lieutenant Bonaparte seized Jean Dortan's bare arm and dragged him on in a hurry. He caught up Mademoiselle de Sirac; he passed her. For a hundred yards he paraded before her eyes hugging the arm of his peasant friend. And always he held her whip.

On the next day Lieutenant Bonaparte neither sat in the vineyards nor heard the catechism. A good gentleman shirked his duty, and the chance fell to Lieutenant Bonaparte of taking two guns out for exercise. Lieutenant Bonaparte had the quality—unique in his regiment—of liking to work at his trade. He led those guns forth eagerly.

The cavalcade of the seigneur was coming through the village of Sirac. A huge, many-coloured pageant, with rangers in russet-brown and stalwart verderers in green and wardens of field and water, all grey and blue and gold, it should have made the villagers gay. But they all, men, women, even young maids, stood sullen. It was they—their rags, their black bread, their hovels—that paid for all the splendour. They had lately understood it. They had learnt how to hate.

M. de Sirac, the old seigneur, laughed at them and their hatred. He loved to parade his magnificence before the peasants he flayed.

He was riding there, a lean, wiry man, with the wrinkles of age covering his hale, brown face, between his daughter and his nephew Denis, they three majestic, last of all. A tiny child, half-naked, darted across the village street under the horses' bridles, as mad children love. It tripped, it fell flat before M. de Sirac. And M. de Sirac did not check his horse. . . . A girl darted out, and, while it seemed impossible, caught the child from beneath the hoofs. M. de Sirac's horse, scared at the whirl of rag and limb, reared and plunged stumbling to its knees. M. de Sirac was flung forward, was all but thrown. M. de Sirac recovered himself and his horse (he could ride—at least he could ride), and turned his cold, yellow eyes upon the child's saviour. She stood now hugging the child to her bosom, and the mother was kissing it and her.

"That girl!" said M. de Sirac, pointing at her with his whip.

She came out to him faltering, trembling under her tattered gown, and stood so while he bent on her a long, thoughtful, torturing gaze. She was a maid in the first of her womanhood.

"You have put me to trouble," said M. de Sirac. "I shall flog you for that." The girl drew away from him, cowering, wild-eyed.

M. de Sirac signed to two of his grooms, and they dismounted and seized the girl roughly. She clasped her arms across her bosom, moaning. Her frightened eyes sought Mademoiselle de Sirac. But Mademoiselle

de Sirac's lovely face was cold in pride. She was a woman, but she was her father's daughter. She had seen the like of this from babyhood. She was a woman, but a woman of the people was neither kin nor kind. Why spare the whip to this girl more than to horse or hound? Only Denis de Sirac, her cousin, moved in his saddle and looked all ways.

The girl's young limbs were writhing in the grip of the grooms. Then the child's mother rushed forward and cast herself down before M. de Sirac. "Monseigneur, monseigneur, let it be me—the whip for me. She—she is a maid."

"Am I to do your pleasure?" said M. de Sirac. "The whip for her, and you to see it. Lay on, Joseph."

A whip went up in the air, the mother shrieked. . . .

Jean Dortan, the blacksmith, came thrusting through to the midst. He struck one groom over the heart and the man dropped, shaking; he caught the other by chin and scalp and hurled him away. And the girl, free again, ran like a frightened hare. But Jean Dortan, howling, darted at M. de Sirac and clipped him about the waist and tore him from the saddle and flung him down. "Wolf of an aristocrat!" he shouted. "Maid-beater! So!—so!" And he stamped upon M. de Sirac.

They were all wrenching their horses round, they were all spurring to be at him. Jean Dortan gave a wordless yell and darted off down the road to Valence. Rangers, verderers, grooms, they jostled and baulked each other in their haste to be after him.

Lieutenant Bonaparte was coming with his two guns up the road. Lieutenant Bonaparte saw Jean Dortan

flying for his life from a mob of M. de Sirac's men; saw also in the one flash of those grey eyes that there were vineyards on either side the road in which no horse could move. Lieutenant Bonaparte then discovered that the needs of military training bade him have one gun turned to the right-about. The road was narrow, the gun and its limber long. The road was barred to its ultimate inch. Jean Dortan, indeed, bending low, wriggled through under the limber. But the horsemen all were stayed. They halted in constrained hurry, charging each other, angry, blaspheming. And the artillerymen, attending carefully to the flood of instruction which flowed from Lieutenant Bonaparte's lips, handled their gun with extreme patience. And all the while Jean Dortan was speeding away to Valence. When the gun was near round and the horsemen thrust forward to break past, Lieutenant Bonaparte rode back and gave his whole mind to turning the second gun. A blue heaven smiled down upon the humour of things.

So it happened that Jean Dortan had many hundred yards' law by the time the horsemen were after him again, and M. de Sirac with his daughter and his nephew thundering up to Lieutenant Bonaparte, irate. M. de Sirac desired to know many things, but chiefly why Lieutenant Bonaparte must needs turn his accursed guns—which he bade remove themselves forthwith and for ever from the seigneurie of Sirac.

"I think," said Lieutenant Bonaparte, "that you are interfering with a King's officer in his duty. The punishment for that is the wheel."

"Do you threaten me, sir?" cried M. de Sirac. "I will have you broke. I will have you in the galleys."

The villain trod upon me! He walked upon me! And you——”

“I expect that you found him heavy,” said Lieutenant Bonaparte, with polite interest.

“Heavy!” gasped the injured M. de Sirac.

But his daughter laid her hand on his arm. “The fellow jeers at you, sir,” she said. “Come!” Her eyes were flaming upon Lieutenant Bonaparte in the bitter anger of fear. Lieutenant Bonaparte first of men had dared dispute her will—had dared, perhaps, to conquer. The pride of her birth, the pride of her maidenhood, felt the alarm. . . . So they too galloped after Jean Dortan. And Lieutenant Bonaparte continued his military exercises with satisfaction.

Spite of the ground won for him, spite of his strength, Jean Dortan was hard pressed ere he came to the outskirts of Valence and the barracks and the inn beside. He turned like a hunted beast to find some hiding hole. Then Colonel Vassary, washing his hands in his bedroom at the Green Boar inn, is surprised by the arrival of a square man who reeks of sweat, whose chest and flanks toss like the sea, who sobs out, “Hide me!—hide me!”

Colonel Vassary was never too much surprised to act adequately. He thrust Jean Dortan into a chest and locked him in; then flung open the back window and leant half out of it, shouting. His ingenious energy was not superfluous. A moment after a pair of M. de Sirac’s rangers burst in. Colonel Vassary turned at the sound of them. “What, more?” he inquired. “Will you go out of the window, too?”

“Is that where the rascal went?” they cried, and rushed across the room and scrambled out.

“Yes, there, across the courtyard”—Colonel Vassary was quite agitated—“round by the far stable. Who is he?”

But the good men were gone. Colonel Vassary turned from the window and with swift skill pierced holes in the back of the chest. A sneeze rewarded him. Then—his swiftness had been only swift enough—a procession of Sirac’s men poured into the room, and to all of them Colonel Vassary was affable and informing. When he had been long rid of them, when he felt quite safe, he locked the door and unlocked the chest and gave Jean Dortan water and asked for his story. He listened to the end without a word; then, “Things will happen to this country,” he said. “But there are men in it,” and he held out his hand.

In the night Lieutenant Bonaparte was waked by a hand on his shoulder. Jean Dortan’s voice spoke out of the darkness. “Salute, my lieutenant! I come to thank you. He does not forget, this little Jean Dortan. And now I go to Paris. Things move there, they say.” With that Jean Dortan vanished from Valence to make one more man in Paris bent on revolution.

On the next afternoon Lieutenant Bonaparte, proceeding to dine with his brother-officers at the Green Boar, was intercepted by Colonel Vassary. “You know how to handle guns, sir,” quoth Colonel Vassary, and made the military salute. “And that is why I would advise you not to come to dinner. M. de Sirac and his nephew are there, and the old man looks murder more than I thought a white man could.”

“And you suggest that I should be a coward?” Lieutenant Bonaparte inquired.

Colonel Vassary declined with a shrug to suggest anything.

Lieutenant Bonaparte proceeded to dine. In the anteroom he met none of the rough subalterns' gibes to which he was used. From all came the frigid civility of M. de Sirac—of M. de Sirac, who stood lean and grim with yellow eyes that glittered and flickered as they looked at Lieutenant Bonaparte. The tale of the turning of the guns had gone abroad. Lieutenant Bonaparte had dared insult the seigneur. From the seigneur the officers of the regiment La Fère took their tone. Now Lieutenant Bonaparte was not even comrade enough for a jeer, was alien, outcast, enemy. All stood aloof. And yet of all the company only Lieutenant Bonaparte himself was wholly at ease. Least comfortable was Denis de Sirac, who could not keep still, who spoke nervously to this man and that and never waited for an answer.

At table Lieutenant Bonaparte was set opposite M. de Sirac, with Denis on his right hand. He saw M. de Sirac's yellow eyes look at him with hate. He spoke to Denis, and had no answer; he spoke amiably again, and won an insolent rebuff. Then he caught M. de Sirac smiling approval on Denis. He could not miss the truth. Denis had been brought there to fight him. He continued to be most polite to Denis.

The dinner was done. The wine had gone round and round. M. de Sirac's fingers were tapping impatiently on the table. Denis turned in his chair and glared at Lieutenant Bonaparte. "There is a curst Corsican flavour in the air," he snarled. Lieutenant Bonaparte sipped his wine. "I said Corsican, sir," cried Denis.



"Sir, you could not pay me or the air a better compliment," quoth Lieutenant Bonaparte.

"Oh! I suppose it would be a compliment to call you rascal?"

Lieutenant Bonaparte yawned. "A compliment that I answer with a pistol."

"Then have with you," cried Denis, starting up.

Lieutenant Bonaparte sat sipping his wine.

A pair of pistols were swiftly produced, two seconds as swiftly. There was glee among the officers of the regiment La Fère. "At arm's length?" one asked.

"As near as the gentleman wills," said Lieutenant Bonaparte rising. "But I should like to know whether he fights for the right to ride over babies or for the right to flog maids?"

Denis was heard to mutter an oath. He bit his lip and looked uneasily at Lieutenant Bonaparte. Then he came forward, and, pistol in hand at arm's length, the two stood against each other, and Bonaparte's dingy, small, mean form against Denis's splendid strength. The candles were shifted till the light fell fairly across them. Behind, the officers of the regiment La Fère made a half-circle, with the joyful face of M. de Sirac in the midst.

"Fire!" The word rang out, and on the word Lieutenant Bonaparte fired. . . . But his pistol flashed in the pan, and he was left unarmed, helpless, for Denis to kill. Lieutenant Bonaparte let the useless pistol fall. . . . Denis's loaded barrel made a circle over his heart. . . . Bonaparte, the little man, stood quite still. Light fell upon the warrior power of his face, the large, dominant lines of nose and chin and jaw, the great dome of forehead. From beneath that the fierce gleam

of his steel eyes clove up at Denis de Sirac. . . . Denis's hand wavered. His pistol moved unsteadily along Bonaparte's breast. . . . Bonaparte was fighting, not for life, but for a man's soul. . . . He stood still, breathing calm and quiet as a child, and Denis de Sirac trembled, with a cold sweat upon him, and in the stillness before the eyes of blind men their souls did battle.

"I cannot!—I cannot!" Denis flung his pistol clattering away. "Ah, God, you are a braver man than I!" He bowed himself and fell into a chair and hid his face. . . .

The soul of Denis confessed defeat. Bonaparte was ready to make defeat easy. He put his hand on Denis's shoulder. "Sir, only a brave man would dare say that."

Then from M. de Sirac came a gasping cry, "By heaven, the boy is mad!" And one of the wise officers called out, "Coward!—coward!"

"Ah!" Bonaparte swung round. "Will the gentleman who said that stand before me as I stood before my friend? . . . No? . . . Then he will not presume to be critic of us."

There was uneasy bustle and muttering. Then one of the wise officers came up to congratulate Lieutenant Bonaparte, and another, and another, and Lieutenant Bonaparte received them with the smile of understanding. The while Colonel Vassary watched him through thoughtful, dispassionate eyes. He was wondering, he records, whether Lieutenant Bonaparte knew what powers there were in the world greater than himself.

M. de Sirac, a deserted god, stalked away to the

door; and Denis, after a grip of Bonaparte's hand, followed slowly. Outside by their horses, "Shall I come back to the château, sir?" said Denis, in humility.

Through the dark, M. de Sirac looked at him with eyes of hate. "Since you are mad, you are better at home," he said.

In the hall of the château Mademoiselle de Sirac was waiting to meet them. She ran forward to Denis and caught his hands and drew him into the light. "Ah, you—you are not hurt!" she cried. "Then—then it is——" And her voice fell low and failed, and she sped back into the shadow, her hand at her side.

M. de Sirac peered at his daughter. "Be easy, Diane. No one is hurt. Denis has devised a new kind of duel which is very safe. He will tell you." Diane de Sirac stood erect and still, a noble woman's form all golden, and her neck was white through the gloom. M. de Sirac disposed himself easily in a chair. "Come, Denis, tell your lady how you fought for her."

Denis hung his head and shuffled his feet and plucked at his whip. In stammered, awkward sentences he made out his tale. . . . "He stood so still—so quiet—no fear at all. And the eyes—those eyes—they cut through me. He—he saw my soul naked. I was shamed. I—I—ah! I could as easily have shot at God!"

"Oh! God is flattered," said M. de Sirac. "And Diane doubtless is proud of you."

Denis turned slowly to Diane in mute appeal—drew nearer, holding out his hands. "No!—no!" She shrank away shuddering. Then, "Ah! why must you let him conquer you?" she cried in a very pitiful voice. "I loved you!—indeed, indeed, I loved you! Could you not be strong against him?"

“Diane!” cried Denis wildly, snatching at her hand.

She wrenched it away and started back from him. “Never!—never!” she cried, and for a moment loathing possessed her face. Then it was pitiful again. “Ah! Denis, indeed I cannot. I—I would like to love you still, but—but——” Her throat was shaking and her voice failed. “It is true, it is most true, I loved you. Indeed I want to love you now. But you—you failed. And I cannot!—I cannot!” And then her voice rose to a wail. “Ah! our Lady, why, why must he conquer?” . . . She sank down sobbing. . . . With red, tearful face and disordered hair she looked up a moment at the two men. “Go, I pray you!—go!” she cried. . . .

Denis turned away groaning, and M. de Sirac followed him down the hall and patted his shoulder. “You are being rewarded, Denis,” he said.

Diane, alone in the hall, moaned with hands knit together and wild bosom: “O Mary Mother, Mother of God, can no one hold out against him? I must hate him—indeed, indeed, I must hate him. Mary Mother, give me strength!”

At that hour in his lodging over against the bookseller’s in Valence Lieutenant Bonaparte handled Mademoiselle de Sirac’s whip and smiled at it.

There came a week of such happiness as you may fancy at the Château de Sirac. Diane held by herself in proud loneliness, and Denis’s misery was made more bitter by the geniality of M. de Sirac. M. de Sirac’s geniality indeed was large and ominous.

On a forenoon Lieutenant Bonaparte was crossing the barrack yard when he beheld four of the King’s apparitors at the gate. Lieutenant Bonaparte was

interested. A King's apparitor, bearer of the *lettre de cachet* that consigned a man to the Bastille and a life of death, was a new thing in Valence. The chief of the posse asked for the officer of the day. A sergeant led him on. Lieutenant Bonaparte lounged after him. The officer of the day was found. Lieutenant Bonaparte, passing by in slow time, heard the apparitor speak the word "Sirac." Lieutenant Bonaparte understood. M. de Sirac had arranged to reward the undutiful Denis with the Bastille. Lieutenant Bonaparte turned the corner and passed from slow time to speed. He sought the Green Boar and Colonel Vassary.

Into that gentleman's presence he broke violently. "My colonel, you do not love tyrants!" he cried. There was always something of the stage about him. "My colonel, you do not love tyrants!" (And Colonel Vassary opened mild eyes of amazement.) "You are the friend of free men! Help a free man in danger! There are those here with a *lettre de cachet* for Denis de Sirac. Go to Sirac hastily. Get him into hiding. In the sacred name of freedom, my colonel!"

Colonel Vassary still displayed amazement. He could not understand how a man of capacity could demean himself to use rhetoric. But he never refused a good cause that needed him. And he began to pull on his boots. Lieutenant Bonaparte with dramatic gesture held out both his hands in thanks, then turned and sought the barracks again. He found an altercation prosperous.

The apparitor and the officer of the day were crimson. Lieutenant Bonaparte lounged up with disinterested air. "What is the distress, Amadée?" he inquired

of his comrade, innocently. He was informed by both, eager, discordant. The apparitor had desired an escort for himself across the seigneurie of Sirac. The officer of the day had protested that he knew not where to find another officer (that was the way of the regiment La Fère). Hence recriminations and duplicated oaths.

But the apparitor looked at Lieutenant Bonaparte with greedy eyes. "Here is an officer," said he. "Gentlemen, I demand escort of the regiment La Fère in the name of the King. Or I will go away and complain at Grenoble."

Lieutenant Bonaparte shrugged his shoulders. "A bore," said he. "Where are we going, my friend?"

"We are going," said the apparitor with professional secrecy, "across the seigneurie of Sirac."

So you may conceive Lieutenant Bonaparte—after such delay as would suffice for Colonel Vassary to do his part—mounting twenty of his men on their gun-horses and riding forth to make escort for the King's apparitors—to the chief of whom Lieutenant Bonaparte was most affable. And affable so skilfully that after a while the good man explained what he wanted. "We are going," said he, "to the château of Sirac. Your men will surround the château so that no one can get out or in. Then, if he is in, we shall have him before he can get out. If he is out, we shall have him as he tries to get in."

"It would indeed seem so," said Lieutenant Bonaparte.

"I wonder if you know him?" the apparitor questioned.

Lieutenant Bonaparte, as was natural, looked doubt-

ful. The apparitor took from his bosom a leather case, and from that the heavily sealed *lettre de cachet*. Lieutenant Bonaparte took it, read it, and was at once filled with pure and simple joy.

The letter announced merely that Denis-Etienne-Pharamond-Anne-Marie-Sirac de Sirac would be confined during the King's pleasure in the Bastille of Paris. Denis-Etienne-Pharamond-Anne-Marie-Sirac: it was the name of Denis, and for him doubtless it was meant. But it was also the name of his uncle, of M. de Sirac. Lieutenant Bonaparte admired the manners of Providence.

"Well," the apparitor insisted, "do you know him?"

"But it is M. de Sirac, it is the seigneur," said Lieutenant Bonaparte with proper surprise. "You cannot mean to arrest the seigneur."

The apparitor grinned. "Only show him to me, this seigneur—I will arrest him."

"But you pain me," Lieutenant Bonaparte protested; "you distress me. I would much rather go away."

"I command your assistance in the King's name," cried the apparitor. Then he smiled. "Bah! we will see him, this seigneur."

Lieutenant Bonaparte thanked a gracious Heaven for fools.

To sight of the château of Sirac, a grey house above the chestnut woods, they came soon. Lieutenant Bonaparte set his men in a circling chain all round it, then with the apparitors rode on. M. de Sirac was walking on the terrace. He saw the *fleurs de lys* of the apparitors' coats, and smiled. "And that fool Denis," said

he, "is gone riding with the American. He never is where he is wanted." Then louder to the apparitors, "Come, gentlemen, you are very welcome."

The chief of the apparitors walked his horse on to the terrace. "Denis-Etienne-Pharamond-Anne-Marie-Sirac de Sirac?" he said severely.

"Well, sir?" quoth M. de Sirac in disdainful surprise.

"I claim you in the name of the King." The apparitor held out the much-sealed *lettre de cachet*.

"Fool!" cried M. de Sirac. "This is not meant for me."

"I have heard five-and-forty men say that," quoth the apparitor.

"It is meant for another. It——"

"I have heard six-and-forty men say that," quoth the apparitor.

"Fool! It is for my nephew Denis. I wrote to Polignac for a *lettre de cachet* for him, and——"

"M. de Polignac sends one for you."

M. de Sirac gave loose to the tongue of blasphemy.

The apparitor endured for a little. Then, "I will use force if you wish," said he genially, and his men closed about M. de Sirac. M. de Sirac howled for his servants, and a host came running. The apparitor held up his right hand. "I am the King's apparitor," he cried. "In the King's name, let no man hinder me. On peril of the wheel!"

M. de Sirac's servants held off in a muttering crowd while their master struggled. "But if it were M. Denis," said one, "I would strike a blow and a half for him." M. de Sirac heard, and became livid and foamed. So wild was his anger that he saw nothing of Lieutenant Bonaparte, who sat his horse tranquilly



behind a yew-tree enjoying the scene. Lieutenant Bonaparte regretted only that Mademoiselle de Sirac was not there to enjoy it also.

So M. de Sirac, shrieking with passion, was bound behind an apparitor and borne away. Lieutenant Bonaparte remained discreetly in his rear, and escorted the party till they were beyond the bounds of the seigneurie. He saw them fairly on the road to Paris, and then came back to announce with proper amazement to the amazed barracks that the apparitors had taken M. de Sirac to the Bastille.

After dinner in the dusk Lieutenant Bonaparte sat in his lodging teaching Louis the small boy problems of geometry. His landlady announced Colonel Vassary. "Louis," said Lieutenant Bonaparte, "go to bed." And the small boy, preferring bed to geometry, went lightly.

Colonel Vassary came in in his cloak, and behind him another man, at whom, as the light fell on his face and revealed Denis de Sirac, Lieutenant Bonaparte leapt. Lieutenant Bonaparte embraced him ardently. "My friend!" he cried—"my friend!" It was purely of the stage. Colonel Vassary blew his nose. "My friend!" cried Lieutenant Bonaparte, standing on tip-toe to hug the larger man—"my friend!"

It was plainly Denis's cue to cry, "My saviour!" He did not. He flushed and stammered.

"Do not thank me," cried Lieutenant Bonaparte.

"No," said Denis awkwardly. . . . "And now—and now what am I to do?"

"He would come to you and ask that," Colonel Vassary explained. His tone conveyed no admiration of a man who asked another what to do.

"The old life is gone," said Denis sadly. "And now—and now——"

The landlady had appeared timidly and beckoned to Lieutenant Bonaparte. She whispered, "Sir, Mademoiselle de Sirac."

Colonel Vassary, observant, saw break upon Lieutenant Bonaparte's face the cruel smile of combatant greed. Lieutenant Bonaparte turned swiftly and hustled Denis and Colonel Vassary behind the curtain that hid his bed. "Let the lady come," he said.

Diane de Sirac stood before Lieutenant Bonaparte, royal in the power of her beauty. "Mademoiselle," said Lieutenant Bonaparte with a mocking bow, "you are flattering, but less than discreet."

Her passionate dark eyes flamed. "I need no subaltern's wit, sir. Tell me. You were at Sirac to-day? It was you arrested my father?"

"No, mademoiselle. I had only the pleasure of beholding that joyous work."

Her deep bosom rose tremulous in wrath. "Do not dare lie," she cried. "You know that it was your deed. You knew well that the fools should have taken my cousin. It was you—it was you who cheated them."

Lieutenant Bonaparte sat down and laughed. "You surprise me, mademoiselle, by telling the truth. In fact, M. de Sirac has deserved the Bastille so much more than his nephew, that I arranged to give it him."

Diane de Sirac laughed too. She drew herself up, tall and strong in her loveliness, above the little Lieutenant Bonaparte. "That is enough, sir. That is all I need. Now I go to your commandant. I tell him that Lieutenant Bonaparte confesses he arrested my

father with no warrant—confesses he has made a mock of the King's justice."

Diane whirled away. Bonaparte leapt before her, leapt at the door. He turned the key and put it in his pocket. Then he smiled at her.

Her face grew dark. "Do you dare?" she gasped.

"Do you know me so little as to ask what I dare? See, it is night, it grows late, you are alone in my room with me. Raise a din, then, if you will. Have your name linked with mine in the foul mouths of all Valence." She shrank away from him, the vivid grace of her beauty bent and cowering. "Ah! does the thought please you so much, Diane? Do you choose shame with me?"

She shuddered, and her breath came shrill. There was the glistening line of tears on her dark cheeks. "It is base in you," she moaned. "Ah, coward!—coward!"

"I fight for my friend," said Bonaparte coldly. "When your father is come to Paris, he can get a word to Polignac's ear and win his freedom easily. But then Denis will be far away, and safe. Till then I intend that fool tyrant, your father, to taste a little of what you and he deserve." Then the steel eyes flashed at her. "Coward, am I? Base? What is the word for you, then? You, the woman that would please yourself with flogging a brave maid, that yearned for a sister's agony—you, the woman that hunted him who saved her—you, the woman that would have your cousin murder me, and fling him to a living death because he was not vile enough to serve you—you, a woman lusting for all things foul! O God, save all men from such women as you!"

One moment, trembling, quivering, she gazed at him,

then cast herself into a chair, and hid her face. "No!—no!" she moaned piteously. "Ah, you hurt me so!"

"I did not know that Diane de Sirac would deign to be hurt by me."

"Deign? Oh! I pray you, I pray you!" She fell to her knees and clasped his hands close between hers. "Yes! I—I have been proud to you. Ah! am I not humble now?" Her noble, eager face was wrought with pain and shame. Bonaparte looked down at her with cold, curious eyes. She gave a miserable laugh. "Indeed, do you not see why you hurt me so much? I—I—how can I bear you to scorn me? . . . And then you talked of shaming me . . . Ah! have you not guessed? . . . You have fought with me as long . . . Yes! Yes! You conquer. I—I am for you." Her dark eyes glowed through their tears, she drew his hands to her lips, all her vivid loveliness cried to him.

Bonaparte's hard face changed no whit. "You speak of love, mademoiselle? I cannot hear. You are loved by my friend. Denis"—he raised his voice—"Denis!"

Diane started up, her hand to her side. And Denis came, Denis grave and pale.

"Mademoiselle," said Bonaparte, "I pray you for your cousin who has loved you long, who loves you well."

Diane drew swiftly away, "Ah! Denis, I cannot," she cried—"indeed I cannot."

"I know," said Denis sadly—"I know." He looked at her long; then, with a quick indrawn breath, turned to Bonaparte. "Sir, you are a most true friend. You fight for me, you give me my freedom, you—you try

to give me even—ah, God, you are nobler than I.”

Bonaparte, the little man, looked from one to the other, the two strong and lovely as man and woman may be in their springtime, the two who had been happy till his power cut across their lives. There was a light in his grey eyes not of love nor friendship—the barren joy of conquest. He had fought for their souls, and won. Defeat was all he wanted of them. . . .

“I go,” said Denis. “I shall find some life to live. Sir, I shall always try to do nothing unworthy of the man who is your friend.” He turned to his love: “Diane!” A listless hand fell into his. Denis held it long to his lips. Bonaparte opened the door. Bonaparte gave him an embrace. Denis went out to the night alone.

Diane, lovely, radiant of joy, came swift to Bonaparte, holding out her hands. “Now, now”—she gave a low, glad cry—“what hinders now?”

Bonaparte put up a hand against her. The smile froze on her lips. The glow in her eyes was dead. “Mademoiselle, this. I dare not say to you what you have said to me.”

“You—you do not care?” she cried.

“Can I cheat you?”

She reeled, she fell against the wall and leant there, hiding her face. . . . She turned, and her lips were white. “You are good not to cheat,” she said feebly. . . . “Yes, you are good and great and true. You could not love me. . . . And yet—and yet”—the white lips parted in a piteous smile—“I am glad I love you, you know.”

Bonaparte bowed. . . . ‘And Diane went out to the night alone.

Bonaparte shut her out, and, turning, picked up her whip and smiled at it.

Then Colonel Vassary came out from behind the curtain and considered him gravely. "Is it worth while?" Colonel Vassary inquired.

Bonaparte played with her whip and smiled still.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW HE CHOSE LIFE

THE Dauphiny was aflame. To that most miserable province the spirit of liberty had come at last: and men who had had a right to nothing, not even to life, woke suddenly to their manhood, and drunk with their own strength and frenzied with past wrongs, smote down their lords in a welter of blood and fire.

When the wild horde broke, with mattock and torch, into the château of Sirac, M. de Sirac, the old seigneur, killed his man and was killed, sword in hand, in his own hall. He was fortunate. They hunted for his daughter to mock at her with his blood. But she was not found. No one, you might think, would put himself to pains to save one of the seigneur's kin. And Diane de Sirac, who was pride incarnate, who cared just so much for men and women as for her hound, had scorned to earn kindness. But there are men whom a woman's haughtiness pleases. Diane de Sirac had found favour with a footman. It was he who led her away, wild with rage and shame—not fear—and brought her out by a servant's stair and set her on the road to Valence. He would have come to guide her farther, but she bade him away proudly as of old, and reluctant, submissive, the fellow left her. That she should be grateful occurred to neither of them.

She made her way afoot, and near penniless at last, to Paris. There only, with all France in turmoil, with

her kinsfolk slain, could she count on a friend. There only she knew men to trust—Captain Bonaparte, her cousin Denis.

I wonder sometimes whether to sneer at Denis de Sirac or honour him. Though Diane had loved him, had promised herself to him, before Captain Bonaparte came into their lives and compelled her love and won it and scorned it, yet Denis stayed Bonaparte's friend, and, hopeless, loved Diane still. He has been called noble—and other names.

Now for shelter, for bread, the girl had to get help of one or other. All her love, her very soul, were Bonaparte's. To Denis she had nothing to give. She was wholly a woman. It was of Denis she chose to beg. That was shame enough. Lurking in a squalid lodging of the Rue Pastourelle, she ate the meanest food and bent her pride to ask seamstress work of coarse women of the town, hoping, struggling desperately for an hour when she could be free of his alms.

Denis, aristocrat of twenty descents, was earning a difficult living in a harness shop. Thence he came often to Diane's lodging—more often than she wished—and sometimes he brought Captain Bonaparte. He longed to make her happy. Captain Bonaparte, wanting nothing of the girl, had still the amusement of being sure of her, and enjoyed her discomfort. His tastes in pleasure were less than divine.

While Diane was alone, a vision of the two came up before her many a time: Bonaparte, the little man of the dominant steel eyes and the massive, hard face that mocked at everything but material power—Denis, sad and tender with hopeless love. And she thought of the days when she had been happy with Denis, and



yearned sometimes to love him again and find peace. But Bonaparte had gripped her soul.

In these dragging days of trouble the charm of her grew. Of old, in the wealth of her pride, she had been of a glorious queenly beauty. Now there came to ennoble it the knowledge of sorrow, and a wistful yearning for things beyond. Now she put on a rarer, purer loveliness.

About her roared the mad Paris of the Terror. Time and again she heard the mob rave down the street upon the scent of blood, and the shrieks of a wretch killed hideously. She heard the drums that beat for the slaying of the Queen. She saw Marie Antoinette, a grey wan widow, borne by on the tumbril, reeling helpless with bound hands as it jolted over the stones through a mob that jeered at her with filthy taunts and spat. She was of those who trembled to the yell of joy that echoed over Paris when Sanson held aloft the head and the mob saw its blood.

That night she had to take a bundle of linen back to a shop-woman. Her way was across the Place de la Révolution. There, beneath the scaffold, there upon the ground that had drunk the Queen's blood, a wild throng reeled in torchlight, dancing. In the midst moved asses housed in surplice and cope, and ridden by half-naked men girt with scarlet, who yelled a foul mockery of the liturgy. All about them men, women and girls, dishevelled, bare of neck and breast, flung themselves to and fro shrieking, drunk with stupid passion. It was the *carmagnole*, the dance of liberty.

One reeking *sans-culotte* caught Diane de Sirac about the waist, and was whirling her into the throng.

She—she was strong as many a man—wrenched herself free and hurried away, in a frenzy of loathing.

But another man, who had seen it, and marked her strength and beauty, followed her—followed her home.

This was one whom the memoirs call Simon the Sausage. The Terror gave their chance to a galaxy of rogues who hang now carrion on the gibbet of history—Hébert and Carrier and Barère. Simon the Sausage might have been the equal of the worst of them. But he crossed the path of Captain Bonaparte. Before that, indeed, he lived long enough to do some considerable vileness. He led in the foul butchery of the Princesse de Lamballe. It was his ingenious mind that thought of making the daughters of aristocrats drink their fathers' blood. For reward, the Government of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, the austere worshippers of reason, made him chief gaoler of the Conciergerie, and there, half-turnkey, half-spy, he worked as hard for the devil as any man of his day.

He was of middle size, this Simon the Sausage, and very sleek, with a fat face of small features. You may see him on that autumn night going stealthily as a beast of prey close after Diane's footsteps, marking with greedy eyes every turn of her form.

With the noon of the next day came to her dingy little room a pair of big, dirty, red-capped tipstiffs—ministers of that strange Committee of Public Safety.

"The Citizeness Sirac?"

"It is I."

"To the Conciergerie!"

"What do you want of me?" she cried.

One drew his filthy finger across her white neck.

She started back, shuddering—with loathing, not

fear. "I have done nothing," she said, cold and defiant. "I will not go."

With a laugh the two caught her in their arms. "Struggle, then. It will be the more amusing;" and they hugged her between them, limb to limb.

She was still as a statue, and cold. . . . Reluctantly they let her go. So, unresisting, disdainful, she went their way, down narrow streets where patriot *sans-culottes* howled jokes at her to the tipstuffs, and the tipstuffs jeered foulness back. . . . The hungry gates of the Conciergerie closed upon one victim more.

She was alone, in a dark cell, and Simon the Sausage came to her. "Ah, Diane Sirac," said he, smiling and licking his lips—"the lass that would not dance the *carmagnole*. Well, Diane, your head will try dancing away from your body. So—flick, plop, plop." He imitated the sound of the guillotine, the fall of the head to the basket, and licked his lips again as he looked at her.

"That—is that your charge?" she cried. "Because I would not dance with those beasts I am to die?"

"We like the colour of aristocrats' blood," said Simon. "Have you much blood in you, Diane?" He gripped her chin in his sleek hand and turned her face to the light. Fiercely she thrust him away. "Well, I shall see it come out," said Simon, laughing silently, and with that left her.

Life—life had given her no joy. An end of it all—an end of the struggle and squalor and shame; death, though death meant nothingness—might well have been grateful. But she clung desperately to life. All her being longed to do its work in the world she knew. . . . And while she lived she had still some desperate hope of Bonaparte's love. To die without it, to pass

unloved beyond the veil—that was the bitterest shame and pain. . . . There was no fear in her, but she throbbed with longing for life.

Ah, if he knew! She saw again the dominant warrior strength of that massive head, the trenchant gleam of his steel eyes. There was nothing could stand against him—against him who was power itself. Yes! He could save her from the very verge of doom. . . . And he would. He cared enough to do that. He was her—friend (she blushed and was cold again as she thought the word). . . . Only her friend. . . . Ah, but if he thought of her in peril and suffering—if he worked for her and saved her—if he gave her life again—surely of that might come love . . . love. . . . She blushed again, and now was glad of her blush, and gave a little low laugh.

She had no thought of Denis.

Keys were rattling in the corridor, bolts and hinges creaked. Her own door was flung open again. "She-*aristocrat!*" a turnkey called to her, "Come!" She saw prisoners thronging down the squalid gloomy corridor, laughing gaily as though it were a gallery of the *Trianon*, and the Queen still reigned. "Come, sow, go with your herd," cried the turnkey, impatient.

She turned from him disdainfully. With some foul word, he was shutting the door again. Then suddenly, all pride gone, she ran to him. "Ah, sir, if I might write a letter?" she cried, her hand on his. He slammed the door in her face.

But, after a while, he came back, strangely transformed, unctuous, not surly. "Citizeness, we allow you to write," he said with a leer, and gave her paper and ink and pen.

SIR,—I am here in the Conciergerie, in peril of death, or I know not what. Help me, I pray you; save me.—  
DIANE.

Hastily, with trembling hands, she wrote, and her heart was quick in joy. The letter was folded, and addressed to Captain Bonaparte, in the Rue Thérèse. Blushing, smiling, she held it out to the turnkey: "Sir, I would thank you much to send it."

"Send it?" says the fellow, grinning. "Surely, my wench," and he stuffed it into his blouse. "Come, now!" He put his arm round her waist and swung her through the door. "Away, with your herd!" He pointed down the corridor and turned away.

Diane came to the hall of the prison and found it thronged. As she went in, diffident, wondering, an easy delectable jest rang in her ear and jarred strangely. But all, in their pathetic shabby finery, all were gay. Here, some walked a minuet, with punctilious grace. There, they were eager over the cards at ombre. Many and many a woman was laughing and blushing as she played at love. The shadow of death had no power.

A little old man slid to Diane's elbow. His bow was worthy the Grand Monarque. "Mademoiselle will permit me the felicity of presenting myself—the Marquis de Niort."

"It is an honour to Diane de Sirac, sir," says she, with a curtsy.

The old gentleman bowed again, and, taking her hand, led her delicately through the throng to his wife. The Marquise de Niort, little and old like himself, drew Diane's stately beauty to her bosom. "Do not grudge

me so great pleasure, my dear," she said, and kissed the girl.

With that, with that at last, Diane's eyes were wet, and for a moment she could not speak. "Ah, it is good of them to let us all be together," she said unsteadily.

"Pray do not do the *canaille* the injustice of supposing them kind," said the Marquis. "We are brought together in order that they may read out to us the list of those who are to visit the guillotine to-morrow. They hope for some amusement from our emotions and our farewells. I think"—he smiled satisfaction—"I think we have amused them very little. We prefer to amuse ourselves," and he waved a delicate lean hand to the card-players, and the dance, and the love-making. Then, turning to his wife, "But indeed, madame"—and he bowed to her—"where you are there must always be joy."

"When the men are happy, happiness is easy for us, is it not, my dear?" The Marquise smiled to Diane, and gave room for her on the bench.

Men and women came from their cards and their games of love to greet Diane and welcome her, with hospitable grace, to their company. In the midst of the gay politeness, Diane's smile suddenly died. "Denis!" she gasped. Denis was coming swiftly towards her, and she started up to meet him. "Why are you here?" she cried.

Denis was dumb, gazing at her in wild sorrow. The Marquis de Niort explained. "When the Queen"—he crossed himself—"was on her way to—happiness, monsieur had the honour of beating down a rogue who insulted her. Thereupon he had the pleasure of being

set upon by the *canaille*. I protest I envy monsieur."

"It was like you, Denis," said Diane, and smiled at him.

"But you, Diane, you?" Denis cried.

"I? Oh, after—after—at night—I would not dance the *carmagnole* with them."

Denis and she stood together, tall and strong, and the Marquis de Niort smiled at them. She was thinking that they were well matched.

But Denis, looking into Diane's glorious dark eyes, flinched like a man in pain. "Ah, Diane, you too!" he said hoarsely; "that is hard."

Diane drew him away, drew him close to her and whispered: "Denis, there is hope! there is hope!" I have got a letter to Captain Bonaparte. He may save me—oh, you know he can!—and if me, he must save you too."

Denis stepped back a pace. His eyes had no joy. "If he saves you—it is well," he said in a moment.

"You know how great he is!"

"I know," said Denis.

And indeed Diane's letter had come to Captain Bonaparte. Captain Bonaparte sat in his little room in the Rue Thérèse studying the strategical remains of the Maréchal de Maillebois. To him entered Simon the Sausage, and, without a word, held out the letter. Bonaparte flicked it open:

SIR,—I am here in the Conciergerie, in peril of death, or I know not what. Help me, I pray you; save me.—DIANE.

You imagine the smile on that bronze face. It

amused him that she should cry to him. It amused him that she should suppose he would risk himself to help her.

He looked up and saw Simon the Sausage smiling too. "What are you?" said Captain Bonaparte sharply.

"I will show you," said Simon, and whistled between his teeth.

On the instant broke into the room four red-capped tipstaffs. Simon the Sausage jerked his thumb at Captain Bonaparte. "The Citizen Bonaparte, for conspiring to rescue the prisoners of the Republic. To the Conciergerie."

Emotions less than the noblest possessed Captain Bonaparte. He started up with an oath: "Fool! because a lovesick wench writes a fatuous letter, am I to suffer?"

Simon the Sausage grinned: "My brave man, you should not let she-aristocrats love you. Come, Citizen, come and be wed, with the scaffold for the church and Madame Guillotine for priest." He led the way out, singing:

*Allons, enfants de la patrie!  
Le jour de gloire est arrivé——*

and so Bonaparte, struggling, swearing, was borne away to prison, while the tipstaffs yelled the "Marseillaise."

In the hall of the prison the Marquise de Niort had a laughing company about her who played at making rhymes. From amidst another throng in the gay arch, in the voice of a girl, came La Fontaine's song: "Love is master of all the world—love, then, love; all the rest



is nothing." The dancers were smiling at each other. But in the courtyard without, pressing against the gate's iron railings, were grim faces of hate—men, and sexless women, yearning for the sight of suffering.

Turnkeys shuffled into the hall, and one took his stand on a chair. From the courtyard came a hoarse yell: "The batch, the batch for Madame Guillotine."

The song fell silent, the dance stopped lazily; nonchalant, the prisoners disposed themselves to listen. The Marquis de Niort yawned. "This affair is daily more fatiguing," he remarked.

In a raucous voice the turnkey began to read the list of those who were to die on the morrow. He paused long between each name, and he and his fellows and the crowd without stared greedily at the victim for signs of sorrow or pain or fear.

But they had little amusement. Men and women met the sound of doom with an easy smile. Once, indeed, a choked sob brought a roar of laughter from beyond the gate. The Marquis de Niort turned to stare at the offender. "The person Barbesieux," he remarked. "Base blood came into that family under Louis XIII."

And then the Marquis heard his wife's name and his own. The look of bored contempt on his face changed no whit. His fingers still drummed lightly on his knee. And Madame la Marquise smiled. . . . In a moment more the list of death was done.

The Marquis turned to his wife: "We are fortunate, madame," and he kissed her hand.

"So I am never to know what sorrow is like," she said.

And all around, those who were to live another day

came thronging to congratulate those for whom the morning would bring death.

The mob of the courtyard slunk snarling away.

That old *noblesse*—people of no importance, who conceived themselves lords of the earth—they were ridiculous enough. But they knew how to endure; they knew how to die.

Into the hall where they were glad in the coming of death was thrust Captain Bonaparte. Some one turned to welcome “the last guest of our hotel, death’s new courtier,” but shrank back from the cold glare of his grey eyes. Bonaparte stumbled through the throng, a strange, grim little figure, his huge head sunk upon his shoulders, the mighty, bronze face of him distorted with impotent, angry hate. “Faith, ’tis the devil himself in torment!” some one muttered.

Diane saw him, and her face was frozen in white horror. Captain Bonaparte glared at her. “I do not know why you should be surprised, mademoiselle,” he snarled. “Your stupidity has brought me here.”

“I?” Diane gasped, her hand gripping at her heart. “I? Ah, no, no: do not say it!”

Bonaparte swore. “Fool! When you write to me to rescue you from prison and gave the letter to a turnkey, what did you hope but that I should have to die with you—and die cursing you!”

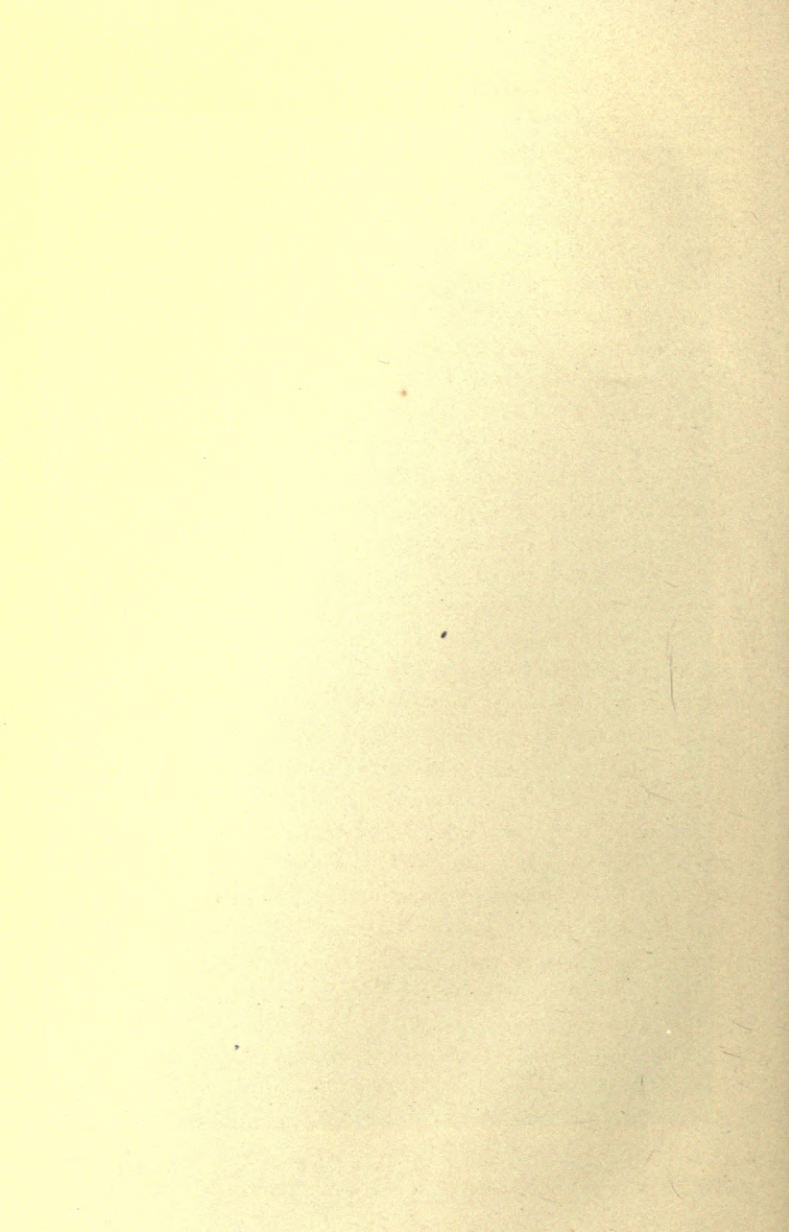
At that even Denis, who had loved him, had worshipped him more than man should worship man, looked grim at him. “You are less than generous, Bonaparte,” he said.

But Diane had sunk down and hid her face, and bowed herself, and was wrought with sobs.

“Generous!” cried Bonaparte. “I want life. Do you



Bonaparte Stumbled Through the Throng, a Strange  
Grim Little Figure



understand? I want life! I can use it. I do not make a toy of it, like these children. Am I to die for a she-fool's vapours? To die now, with nothing done?"

With contempt the Marquis de Niort turned to Captain Bonaparte. "You make a noise, sir," he said. "It is vulgar. And you do not seem to understand that it is honour for you to die on the same scaffold as mademoiselle."

Bonaparte flung from him, crying an oath, and stamped to and fro among the crowd, gnawing his nails. Denis looked after him with something like scorn, and then gravely, sadly, and most tenderly down at Diane torn with grief.

Away in the background Simon the Sausage was much pleased with their emotions and, taking his fill of delight, waited long before he started the cry, "Pigs, back to your styes," and set his turnkeys driving the prisoners away to their cells again. As they went Denis snatched Diane's hand to his lips.

You may think of Bonaparte raging, impotent, all night long. He was little enough a coward. But the vast power of him robbed of a chance to use itself, and the giant ambition baulked of all its desire, gnawed and racked him. To die barren of achievement! It was worse to him than shame to a woman.

But Diane!—through the gloom you see Diane fallen across her bed and moaning. . . .

Simon the Sausage came into the cell with a lantern, looked at her, cheery and critical, chuckled, sat himself on the bed beside her, put his arms about her and lifted her. A wan, wet, piteous face amused him further. She hung lifeless upon his arm, stared at him with

unseeing eyes, dazed. Simon clasped her against his sleek breast.

Then, with wild strength, she hurled herself free, and stood, flushed and gloriously beautiful, in the proud courage of her maidenhood.

Simon approached her with a leer.

She drew herself up, lips set, eyes defiant.

Simon thought better of it. "I never fight women. I arrange that they have to offer. You will be ready enough to kiss, my dear, when you are my wife."

A moment her eyes were amazed, a moment she blushed. Then her scornful laugh rang out. Simon shrugged. "It is amusing, is it? Think, my pretty; as sure as your skin is white, you are to wed the guillotine. Well, I like you big women. Wed me instead, and I will save you." She laughed again. "Do you think there is any woman would not rather wed death than you?"

"I thought you were one of these proud pieces. That is why I like to make you grovel. Well, my pretty, and what of your love? You brought him here, you know!" The girl quivered and Simon grinned: "Oh, by the basket, you are a kind fool! You brought him here, and Madame Guillotine shall have his head unless you are my little wife. Think, my pretty! The dear one's head to the basket unless you take Simon to your arms!"

She looked down at him with eyes of loathing. "Hound! Do you think I would wrong him so?"

"Wrong him!" Simon laughed. "Wrong him! Good, by the sawdust: good! Do you think any man would love you as well as life? And this booby of yours—I heard him thank you for bringing him into danger.

By the basket, how he will thank you for bringing him to death! Try him, my pretty. Tell him you have only to wed to keep his head on, but he must die to keep you a maid." She was white and dumb.

Simon laughed at her and went out singing:

*En rêvant à la sourdine  
J'ai fait une machine,  
Tralala la, lalala, lala, lalala, lala, lalala,  
Qui met les têtes à la bas.*

Simon was most happy. To be master of Diane's beauty, that indeed he desired, but to see her torn with the pang of choice between her lover's death and her own life's ruin was greater joy. He looked forward to perfect delight in her agony.

Diane lay writhing in her cell. Sorrow enough it was to have brought her love to death, and sorrow more bitter to choose between saving him and shame; but worse far, the keenest pang her soul could know, to doubt her love—to suspect him base, to fear he would bid her go to shame so he could live. . . . You fancy the shuddering torture of those long dark hours.

Now Simon the Sausage had made a mistake. His view of Captain Bonaparte's emotions had convinced him that the man was a coward. (It is that little mistake of Simon's which robbed him of the time to earn a place on the roll of infamy beside Hébert and Barère). He wrote Bonaparte down a coward, and, greedy for a sight of his emotions in the jaws of death, set him in the batch of those to be tried for their lives on the morrow.

Look at the Hall of Liberty. On its walls are the

busts of Brutus and Marat, those famous sentimental murderers. Beneath them the three judges lounge at their ease, with hats plumed by tricolour streamers tilted back from faces that bear still the marks of last night's debauch at the Restaurant Méot. The jury—from the strange clothes and the wild, dishevelled hair and the bestial howls when some wretch of a prisoner dares speak for his life—you might think them a jury of mad men. In a frenzy of haste, they send women and men to death. They hear no evidence. They scarcely heed the charge. What matter? Here are those of their own kind to slay.

Behind the howling jury you see a sleek face smile. Simon is there, and others of his kind, smiling as the mob of Rome smiled when wild beasts tore and tortured maids.

One poor soul shrieks for mercy. They laugh, and condemn her, and she is dragged down. Comes a man who disdains to plead. He tears open his shirt and shows his neck bare. "Cut, then!" he cries, and him too they doom, and he is gone.

Bonaparte's grim, bronze face stands against the light, and Simon frowns: for there is no sign of fear or pain.

"Accused of conspiracy to rescue prisoners of the Republic," cries the usher, in a breath. "Speak, accused."

Bonaparte turns to the jury. "*Canaille*," says he, and laughs at them.

Yells and shrieks of fury answer, and the turnkeys snatch him away. And so the ghastly mockery goes on. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity prevail in France,



In the hall of the Conciergerie the prisoners were gathered again to hear whom the guillotine would take on the morrow. Again they sat at cards, again they danced. Hands they had kissed and lips that smiled to them yesterday were cold now and under the sod, but still their gaiety mocked at death. . . . Diane's eyes were dull, and her cheeks pale, and she trembled when a woman spoke to her. Already she felt the stain of shame. Denis came to her, and kissed her hand, but at the touch of his lips she shrank away and shuddered.

"Am I so hateful, Diane?" said Denis, with a sad smile.

She was crimson. "No! No! Indeed, not that," she gasped. She looked up at him timidly, and saw the sorrow and love in his eyes. "Oh, you are noble and kind, . . ." again that strange, convulsive shudder. "Ah, please let me be alone!" That strong, clean love of his made the thought of herself and of shame more bitter pain.

Denis could not guess that. Denis turned sadly away. For the first time, Diane, watching him, felt the pain that he felt of his hopeless love. For the first time she was grateful to him for loving her. . . .

And then Bonaparte came, a sneer on his grim face, his grey eyes cruel. "You have been most successful, mademoiselle. I was sentenced to death this morning. I congratulate you."

She drew in her breath with a long sigh of pain. "Oh, you hurt me, you hurt me!" she muttered to herself. Then she rose with strange, stiff movements. "Come with me," she said, and put her hand on his arm.

She could touch him. If there was shame for her, he shared it.

"I could wish you less interested in me, mademoiselle," said Bonaparte sourly.

"Oh, I brought you to death. I know; I know. It hurts enough." She drew him apart, she whispered, trembling: "There is a way. If I—if I will—will give myself to this fellow, this Simon—he will save you. . . . Ah, you see! You see what it means. I give myself up to him . . . all."

Her eyes sought Bonaparte's, wild and eager, yearning for the man to prove himself a man.

Bonaparte turned a little away. His great brow lowered down over his eyes, his chin was sunk on his breast. "Then he will save me?" he asked.

She gave a sudden cry of pain, and pressed her free hand to her side. "Yes, he will save you," she muttered. Then she caught his arm closer. "Ah, but you see, you see what it means!" and her voice throbbed. "It is the end of my honour, and—and yours."

Bonaparte turned to her cold wondering eyes. "I think you owe me a little, mademoiselle."

She drew her hand from his arm, she started away. "You—you bid me to it, then?"

"I have some use for my life," said Bonaparte.

She stood gazing at him long. I think she was wondering how she could ever have loved him—how he could have seemed to her great. And Bonaparte met her with a smile. He had chosen what he valued; he never understood what he lost.

A turnkey came and touched her arm: "Citizeness, Master Simon would have a word with you."

She started round. "I come," she cried, and followed the man swiftly. For the moment all else was lost in a yearning to have done with Bonaparte, to set him free and owe him nothing.

Simon was in a tiny office with the list of the next day's batch for the guillotine before him. He waved the turnkey outside, and, when the door was shut, leered at Diane. "Well, my pretty," said he, nudging her, "and how is the lover to-day? Any more grateful for death? Come now!" He slid his arm round her and she did not resist. "What of our little bargain? Does the dear one bid you let him die? Does your darling love you better than life? Does——"

"Save him!" she cried. "Save him! And I—I will give you all."

Simon laughed. "So the beloved is no such fool, after all. I knew he would teach you another tone. Come then, my pretty"—he drew her against him and saw her loathing. "How you hate me! That will make it more amusing." Then he looked at her curiously. "But, by the basket, how you must love him!"

"Love him!" she cried, and broke away and stood flushed and panting at gaze. "Love him!" she gave a strange, wild laugh. "Oh, indeed, I love him!" Simon looked at her covetously and came to her again. She held him away. "No!" she cried. "Till I see him safe you have nothing of me."

Simon grinned. "Have it so, then. I think I can make life hateful to him. And to you too, my pretty. Away with you. Back to the herd. They must hear which are to bleed in the morning." He drove her out.

Slowly, with faltering steps, she came into the hall again. Bonaparte met her full. Cold and shameless,

his grey eyes questioned. "You are to live. Oh, yes, you are to live," she muttered.

Then, after a moment: "If it be so, mademoiselle, accounts are clear between us," said Bonaparte.

There was scorn in her eyes as she gazed at him; then she started away and groped for a chair and hid her face. Some vision of the agony that waited had come to her, and she loathed him. . . .

Simon was reading the names of the doomed. Some one behind her was sobbing; the mob in the courtyard howled delight; but she heard nothing. . . . Her mind was prisoned in shame. . . .

"Diane!" Her own name sounded strangely. "Diane!" She looked up and saw Denis. "Good bye," said Denis. She gazed at him in terror. "I am one of those who—go——" he said. "Dear, good-bye."

"Ah, Denis! You——!" Her voice went away. Her throat, her bosom, were throbbing wildly.

"It is not hard," said Denis. "Dear, I pray that it may not be hard for you."

"Oh, Denis, if I could save you!" Her brow was bent, she plaited her fingers nervously together. "If I could—ah, I will try! . . . This fellow, this gaoler, he"—she gave a wretched laugh—"he likes me, you know."

Denis gripped her hands. "What do you mean?" And his eyes flamed. "You to beg of that hound? Diane, you dare not! God, I had rather live in hell than have you humble yourself to him. You, Diane! You know you must not!"

Diane, who was looking at him through a cloud of tears, tried to smile. "I must not," she echoed. "I

know, Denis." She caught his hands to her lips and kissed them passionately. "Now go! Please, please go!"

Denis lingered only to kiss her hands in turn. Making his way through the throng again, he came upon Bonaparte, who said coldly, "I am sorry, Denis."

"It is little matter," said Denis. He looked Bonaparte in the eye, man to man. The prison had cured him of worship. Then he wrung Bonaparte's hand: "Man, for my honour, for your honour, be kind to her—help her."

"It is my intention," said Bonaparte.

And now the turnkeys were raising the cry, "Pigs, back to your styes," and the prisoners were driven away to loneliness and gloom. . . .

Think of Diane lying there in the dark, dreaming of shame to come, and hating herself. . . . Simon the Sausage (he was always a careful man) waited for his turnkeys to start their supper carouse before he came to her. At the creak of the bolts she sprang up. "Now, my pretty, joy begins," said he, and took her hand and led her out and down the dim-lit corridor, and unlocked the double doors and brought her to his own quarters and up a stair to a gaudy room. There he lit candles and bade her wait, and went back for Bonaparte. . . . Diane sat huddled together. The glare of light made her shame worse.

Simon was back soon, dragging Bonaparte after him. "Come, my hero," said he. "A little joy for you before you go. This you see"—he took Diane in his arms and she gave a stifled cry of pain: Simon laughed—"this pretty thing, my hero, you leave to me." He

drew Diane, shuddering, against him, and looked, with greedy eyes, to see Bonaparte in torment.

Bonaparte was entirely calm. "You bore me, my friend," said he.

Simon glared, Simon snarled something inarticulate, and his arms fell loose about Diane.

The girl started away. "Let him go; oh, in God's name, let him go!" she cried, loathing them both.

"Do you like leaving her to me, my hero? Then you are the least of a man that ever I knew. But I like keeping you alive. By the basket, I like keeping you alive! You are so nasty a creature. And if you are alive, she will come to hate you." He turned a moment on Diane with a devilish grin. "Yes, it must hurt her to hate you. Come!" He thrust Bonaparte out of the room before him.

Diane gave a great sigh of relief. Some strange, amazing joy stole upon her. . . . She had broken bonds that galled her. She was Bonaparte's slave no more. There was shame, yes, there was agony to come, but now at last her soul was free. . . . Denis! The name stared at her from a list pinned on the wall. "Denis Sirac, Cell 22." Denis, who was going to death, brave and faithful and kind! . . .

She heard the door clang below and Bonaparte's footsteps rang fast in the street—so fast. He was in a hurry, that M. Bonaparte. He was saved—he, the selfish coward. And Denis—Denis—ah, there on the table lay his doom, the long paper written in red: "Batch for To-morrow." With eyes of horror, trembling yet fascinated, she looked down the names. Bonaparte—yes, oh, yes. . . . Sirac? There was no Sirac!

Simon came back. Fierce as a mother robbed of her child, she sprang to him, flung out an accusing arm at him. "You! You said Denis de Sirac was to die—but his name is not there!"

Simon laughed. "I thought that would please you. You see, my pretty, there are twenty ordered for the guillotine, and Sanson will not take less than twenty. So if I let one go I must needs put one in. And, by the basket, if I save one lover of yours I hold it fair to kill the other." He laughed again. "So come, my pretty, a kiss for my pains."

She flung him off so fiercely that he went reeling to the corner of the room. Then, panting and distraught, she looked all about her. Denis was to die. She must die too. There must be some way . . . some way . . . some way. On the table lay a stretch of whipcord. She caught it up and cast it about her neck and was drawing it tight when Simon flung himself upon her and gripped her mad hands. . . . Locked together—she was near as strong as he—they swayed, struggling fiercely, long moments. . . . She weakened. . . . Simon forced her fingers open, tore the cord away, and sprang back with it.

"No, my pretty, you do not die yet!" he snarled, panting, and thrust the cord into his pocket. "Now!" he said, and came to her again.

There was a loud knocking below. Simon, turning with a mutter of amazement, put his head out of the window and saw, through the gloom, a tricolour cloak. He went out in a hurry, locking the door upon her.

Diane cowered against the wall, quivering, moaning . . . God knows what misery was hers. . . .

Faintly from the prison came the turnkeys' drunken, uproarious chorus:

*C'est un coup que l'on recoit  
 Avant qu'on s'en doute,  
 'A peine qu'on s'en aperçoit  
 Car on n'y voit goutte:  
 Un certain ressort caché  
 Tout à coup étant lâché  
 Fait tomber—ber—ber——*

Louder the sound rose through the opening door. Captain Bonaparte came in.

I like to think of Bonaparte's work that night, if only for Simon's sake. Bonaparte had hurried away, and you fancy Simon sneering at the little beast's fondness for his own skin. Bonaparte was thinking wholly of Simon's. That Diane should be in no better arms than Simon's displeased him like a loaf in the gutter. He had, indeed, no throb of emotion for her, no pang at her fate. But Simon offended his brain. And his brain proceeded to deal with Simon.

Once across the Pont Neuf he turned into the first mercer's shop and bought him a tricolour cloak. Then he sought the nearest cuttler's and bought a sheath-knife. And then he was back again and knocking at the door of Simon's quarters. It is like one of his campaigns—to dare everything, confident because no one could dream a man would dare so much.

Simon opened the door and a figure muffled in a tricolour cloak stalked in. It spoke hoarsely: "In the name of the Committee of Public Safety. From the Citizen Robespierre. Secret." Simon shut the door



hastily. And Bonaparte stabbed through his left eye to the brain.

Simon gaped, and his knees opened, and he slid to the ground. Bonaparte's hands were in his pockets as soon, and had the keys out. Bonaparte strode over him upstairs.

"Mademoiselle, I have the honour to offer you my arm," said Bonaparte, coolly. But Diane shrank wildly away. "Come: that gentleman is dead, and the door open to us."

She hardly understood. "Denis," she moaned—"Denis."

"Oh, Denis!" Bonaparte shrugged. "After all, mademoiselle, you come before him, and so do I."

"You coward!" she cried. "He is to die for you." She waved that red list of the doomed before Bonaparte's eyes; in a maze of muddled, angry words she made out the story.

Bonaparte shrugged again. "It is unfortunate for Denis."

"Oh, you are vile and base!" she cried. "Go, then, go!" She ran past him, away, not to freedom but to the prison.

Bonaparte, looking down from the stairhead, saw her stopped by the locked double doors. He came down at his leisure with Simon's keys.

"It appears that I do not suffice you, mademoiselle," he said.

"You!" she gasped: "I loathe you! I hate you."

"Your affections are mutable. But there is no occasion for such emotion. Do you know his cell?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Then"—noiselessly he unlocked the doors, and the

din of the carousing turnkeys came louder—"then why not let him out?" Diane sped away. Bonaparte stayed by the doors, ready to slam them and save himself on the first alarm. He had risked, he conceived, enough.

But Diane had sped, light foot, to the cell and stealthily drawn the bolts. "Denis!" she whispered, through the dark, "Denis, come! Hush, oh, hush! Come, silent." And Denis, but half sure of the truth, half thinking it a dream, followed swift as she. It was enough that Diane bade him.

They were scarce through the double doors ere Bonaparte had them shut and looked again. "My felicitations, Denis," said Bonaparte.

"You!" gasped Denis. "It was you! By heaven, you are more than man!"

"Ah, do not thank him!" Diane cried.

"It appears," said Bonaparte over his shoulder, as he led upstairs—"it appears that mademoiselle has again transferred her affections, Denis. However, they have served my turn, and I am grateful. She seems incapable of that."

Denis—do you wonder the man was dazed?—Denis stared up at him, then down at Diane. And Diane clung to him close, murmuring: "Ah, Denis, Denis, be kind; please be kind."

Bonaparte was trying the keys on all Simon's locked boxes and drawers. "This is the kind of person who should have some money somewhere," said he, and he found it soon—neat bags of gold (Simon had always been neat), with a warrant or two from the Committee of Public Safety. Bonaparte pouched the whole. "And now, mademoiselle," says he, "I can bear you to hate

me, and I will allow you to make Denis do the like, but I think if life with him is more attractive than death you had better confide yourselves to me a while longer." He laughed at them, at Denis's utter amazement, at Diane's frightened hate, and led the way out. In a moment more they were past Simon's dead body, out in the clean night air.

Then you see Bonaparte leading the way to a posting-station, and, brave in his tricolour coat and flourishing warrants in Robespierre's name, demand a chaise-and-four for the Normandy road. Since they would be expected to fly north or east, he chose to fly west. Then, as they sped through the sleeping town, he told, with curt sarcasm, his story. You see that strange little company in the swaying chaise, Bonaparte talking calmly, Denis breaking in with exclamations of disgust and wonder, and Diane away in the corner, still and silent, clinging close to Denis's arm.

And when all was told there was silence a while.

"You are not like a man," said Denis slowly. "You are more than man, and less." Bonaparte laughed.

Then Diane, clinging close to Denis's arm, murmured: "Denis, Denis, you do forgive me?"

"My dear!" said Denis, with something like a sob, and put his arm about her.

"I fear my presence embarrasses," said Bonaparte. "It shall leave you as soon as may be." And at Pontoise, in the grey dawn, he put some of Simon's money in their hands and bade them good-bye.

"For children," he said, "deserve to be happy."

"And you," said Denis, "we shall pray for you to be happy too."

Bonaparte laughed. I suppose he never understood what he had lost.

So there at Pontoise he parted from them and struck away south. They were to have the honour of drawing the pursuit while he won safe away. He was always thoughtful.

But the truth is that pursuit never came near, and Diane slept happy, with Denis's arm about her, while they sped on to the Normandy coast, happy in a love that was freedom. . . .

If you go to a certain Dorsetshire town you may find a Denis Sirac still. He makes very good saddles.

## CHAPTER III

### HOW HE MET A MIDSHIPMAN

BUT it was not all France that loved the Revolution. There were doubts in the south and most doubts in Toulon town.

Toulon town had dared the unpardonable—had dared dislike Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Toulon had denied the rule of the Terror, and hauled the tricolour down and raised the white flag of old France, and called England in aid. And England answered with my Lord Hood's fleet, while the angry armies of the *sans-culottes* gathered and closed.

In the rock-girt harbour of Toulon my Lord Hood's fleet lay at anchor. Gangways were down, booms out, a hundred boats moving across the green water. My Lord Hood's fleet was much at its ease; and Toulon town no less. Comfortable citizens and their women made the promenade on the quay, and gazed and grinned at the grinning English sailors. In the white lanes that led up from the water-side French lads and English linked arms, and rolled along singing their several songs. Now and then a puff of smoke and a dull roar from the black hills above the town told that Toulon was besieged; but nothing was hurt and none heeded.

My Lord Hood, vice-admiral of the blue, paced the quarter-deck of the *Victory*. He was regarding with mild surprise a midshipman who presumed to engage

the attention of his flag-captain. The midshipman was some time in concluding the conversation to his satisfaction. At last he saluted, smiling, and smiling, turned, went down the gangway like a falling star, and hailed a shore-boat. The flag-captain, rubbing a humorous chin, approached his admiral.

"What's Mr. Waring's scrape now?" my Lord Hood inquired.

"Mr. Waring wanted to show me how well he spoke French, sir."

"I don't think a midshipman ought to know French," said my Lord Hood.

"It's unlike a midshipman to know anything," Captain Carew admitted.

"Except devilry," said my Lord Hood, "and French is the same thing. Well, Carew, and what does he want to do with his French?"

"He wanted shore leave for it, sir. Mr. Waring wished to point out that it does these French folks good to hear him talk French. He shows them what the language can be."

"Mr. Waring," said my Lord Hope, "is the most impudent dog in the service."

"I've observed that you have a kindness for him, sir," said Captain Carew.

My Lord Hood frowned at his flag-captain, then permitted himself to chuckle. They paced the deck together, watching the desultory firing, the infrequent smoke-clouds from the hills by Ollioules.

"Those fellows do so damned little," said my Lord Hood, "that I should like to know what they are doing."

But there was no immediate need for my Lord Hood's interest. The *sans-culottes* were doing nothing.

Thirty thousand of them were in camp upon the hills, with General Cartaux in command, and three members of parliament to command General Cartaux. It is possible that they might have done something if any one had known how to do it. This Cartaux, he had been a painter before he set up as general, and he designed himself a most beautiful uniform. With that his military genius concluded. The military genius of the members of parliament seems never to have been born; but one of them had luck. M. Salicetti, a Corsican, was known to a certain Napoleon Bonaparte, captain of artillery, unattached. On a wintry night that "thin, sallow, threadbare figure" tramped through the mud into camp. All his baggage was on his servant's back. He sought out M. Salicetti. He requested a command in the artillery. It is possible that M. Salicetti had a suspicion the artillery needed commanding. Certainly, Corsican had always a human weakness for Corsican. M. Salicetti signed a brevet of chief of battalion.

It was Bonaparte's first command in war. His life had begun.

Armed with his brevet, Bonaparte presented himself in the morning to General Cartaux. General Cartaux, whose artistic uniform was gold lace from chin to heel, sniffed at his new threadbare officer. "Who are you?" he inquired.

"A man who knows his trade," said Bonaparte.

General Cartaux, who had never seen the use of that, sniffed again. He arose, towering a foot above Bonaparte's large head, and surveyed the brief artilleryman with contempt. "It is I who place my batteries," he announced.

"I imagine the terror of the enemy," said Bonaparte.

General Cartaux, who had no brain for sarcasm, was gratified. "You may come the rounds with me," he conceded.

"It will be an education, my general," said Bonaparte with enthusiasm.

In the midst of a dishevelled vineyard they came upon a two score guns in wild disorder, and the most leisurely of fatigue-parties digging an amorphous earthwork. General Cartaux extended an eloquent arm. "There, my chief of battalion. Behold my new main battery. My own design. My own position. It shall bombard the aristocrats of Toulon with red-hot balls."

Bonaparte looked from the disorderly guns to the distant town. "I think the balls will be very cold before they get to the aristocrats," said he.

The magnificent Cartaux rebuked and abused him.

"Certainly, my general," said Bonaparte; "and the battery would be an excellent battery if it were within range of the enemy."

"Not within range, sir?" Cartaux cried. "Here you, sergeant. Turn that gun on the town and fire! Mark now!"

The gun was trained, and laid, and fired. General Cartaux gazed intent at the town ramparts to see his shot work ruin. Bonaparte directed his attention to things more adjacent—showed him the shot ricochetting through olive groves and bury itself in a haystack.

"In fact, that bullet will be very cold before it gets to Toulon," said Bonaparte. General Cartaux had been three hundred yards too sanguine.



"Some cursed aristocrats have adulterated the powder," growled General Cartaux.

Bonaparte turned away with a shrug. General Cartaux, continuing the rounds past other remarkable batteries, did not again consult him.

Coming back to Ollioules, Bonaparte found that his excellent devoted friend and servant, Jean Dortan, had already put him up a hut.

"You are a relief to the monotony, Jean," said he. "You do something. But I fear it will make you unpopular."

Jean laughed. "He does not please you then, this general?"

"I think the aristocrats have adulterated his brains."

Jean Dortan grinned sagaciously at Bonaparte. "*A la bonne heure,*" said he.

Bonaparte sat himself down on a mound of dried turves and there, huddled together, elbows on knees, his great chin in his hands, he stared out through the wintry sunlight to Toulon town and the harbour and the English ships. . . . The ships! They were the strategist's aim. Drive the ships away and Toulon was left helpless. With the ships went her fighting men and her powder and her food. Bonaparte turned his keen eyes to the south, where the hill of Bregaillon rose and the rocky headland of L'Eguillette ran out black into the harbour. An English redoubt crowned the crest. Who held the hills by L'Eguillette held the harbour, held Toulon. My Lord Hood had seen that; Bonaparte saw it too.

Now Bonaparte knew how to deal with most men, even members of parliament. He went off to M. Salicetti and suggested a council of war. M. Salicetti had

a proper member of parliament's affection for councils and committees. He agreed with enthusiasm. They had not had a council for near twenty-four hours. So you see them met in a farmhouse kitchen, the members of parliament, Salicetti and Gasparin and Barras, presiding over General Cartaux and his officers. M. Salicetti made a considerable speech upon Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the honour of dying for one's country, and Marcus Junius Brutus, which he concluded appropriately by asking General Cartaux to expound his plans. General Cartaux, who had been expounding his plans once a day for a week or two, was naturally rather tired of them.

"Citizen representatives!" he cried, magnificent, "I shall bombard Toulon for seven days. Thereafter I shall attack it in three columns. I shall take it. I shall root it out and water its soil with the blood of aristocrats. *Delenda est Carthago!* Cartaux has spoken!"

The citizen representatives were applauding when Bonaparte rose from his place and walked to the table, where a map was spread out. He put his finger on the hills by L'Eguillette. "There is Toulon!" said he.

General Cartaux looked over his shoulder. The intelligence of General Cartaux perceived that his artillery officer said Toulon was where Toulon was not. "It seems that our Captain Cannon is not very good at geography," said he.

But the citizen representatives were capable of seeing that Bonaparte might mean something. It was Barras who asked, "What does the artilleryman propose?"

"Who holds Bregaillon and L'Eguillette holds Tou-

lon. Citizen representatives, permit me to build batteries upon Bregailon. I will promise that they shall hit something, which—" a cold grey eye pierced General Cartaux—"which will be a novelty. And I answer for my success with my head."

"It is no great wager," sneered Cartaux.

But the citizen representatives, having considered Bonaparte's head, thought there might be something in it, and proceeded to questions. Whereupon Bonaparte overwhelmed them with an infinity of detail, which was the more impressive since no one understood it. The end was that they bade him build his batteries.

"Citizen representatives, I thank you!" cried Bonaparte. "I am but a poor man who loves France, whose trade is to serve France. You and the world shall see how."

That night Bonaparte began to build emplacements over against L'Eguillette; and General Cartaux, weaving witticisms about Captain Cannon's cannon, made his work as difficult as possible. It was unwise of Cartaux, for he nourished Bonaparte's conviction that he was a superfluity into an intention of abolishing him.

So suddenly there began to be cause for my Lord Hood's interest in what the *sans-culottes* were doing. It was a question which engaged the attention of another distinguished naval officer—Mr. Midshipman Waring. Mr. Waring always wanted to know what other people were doing. He did not confine his affections to *sans-culottes*. That is why you see him at the door of a neat house in Toulon inquiring for Madame Florian.

Mr. Waring is admitted to Madame Florian's white drawing-room. He marches straight to a mirror and

surveys himself with bland approval. The mirror shows him a slight, lithe lad with a face of delicate innocence, all rose pink and pearl white, and dark blue eyes not innocent at all. Mr. Waring's admiration of himself was interrupted by gay laughter.

Mr. Waring, quite unabashed, turned to bow to Mademoiselle Florian. "I think I am rather good to look at," said he. "Don't you?"

Mademoiselle Florian's eyes were directed demurely to the ground. "It would be very wrong of me to see any of you, monsieur," said she, "for madame my mother is out."

Mr. Waring came to her and took her hand. She persisted in seeing nothing of him. "It could hardly be wrong for you to see yourself," he suggested.

"I should certainly see some one more beautiful," said Mademoiselle Florian.

"If less modest," said Mr. Waring, and led her to the mirror.

Mademoiselle Florian saw a boylike maiden form crowned by a face of ivory, full but fine-wrought, and glossy black hair. The red bow of her lips trembled daintily, her golden eyes sparkled back at her. Mr. Waring took ground in her direction. His innocence appeared in the mirror at her side.

"To see you would be bad manners," said Mademoiselle Florian, and shut her eyes.

"Politeness," said Mr. Waring, "is all I ask"; and he kissed her.

Mademoiselle Florian immediately saw him. She started out of his arms, wide-eyed, blushing delectably, her lips struggling with laughter. "But this isn't polite," Mr. Waring complained.

"You are the most impudently surprising person in the world!" cried Mademoiselle Florian.

"That's why you like me, Madeleine," Mr. Waring informed her.

"Madeleine?" Mademoiselle Florian repeated coldly, and rose to her full height, which was a trifle more than Mr. Waring's. "Sir, my name is not for you."

"No, mine will be for you, Madeleine," Mr. Waring agreed cheerfully.

"If I believed," said Mademoiselle Florian, "I should tremble."

"That is what the devil does," Mr. Waring reminded her. "But you're quite of this world, dear"—he possessed himself of her hands—"and, egad, I want you in it."

"I confess, sir, I am glad you are not out of it," said Mademoiselle Florian. "Oh, without you it would be much less ridiculous."

"I'm glad I know what you like," said Mr. Waring, and drew her against him swiftly, and slipping an arm about her, held her on his breast an instant, till she forced herself away.

"You are tedious, sir," she said frowning.

It is possible that Mr. Waring would have continued to be tedious, but General Cartaux chose that moment to justify the existence of his remarkable batteries by firing a salvo. The roar was loud. Mr. Waring resigned Mademoiselle Florian to walk to the window and see if, contrary to custom, anything had happened. He looked out over the town and saw no sign of shot or shell nor any commotion. He turned with a pucker on his angelic white brow.

“Yes, I would give something to know what those fellows are doing,” he observed.

Mademoiselle Florian presented to him her back.

“You know, they are playing such fool’s tricks that they must have something to spring on us,” Mr. Waring explained.

Mademoiselle Florian still presented her back. She appeared to find Mr. Waring’s new conversation more tedious than his old. Mr. Waring stuck cheerfully to the new.

“I’ll have to go and call on the beggars,” he continued. “I must take care of my Uncle Sammy.” In so disrespectful a way was the gunroom wont to speak of my Lord Hood. “Yes, I think Mr. Waring must take snuff with the *sans-culottes*,” Mr. Waring concluded with a grin.

Mademoiselle Florian turned, stately, and from the superior elevation of her seventeen years, five feet and six inches, looked down upon Mr. Waring’s nineteen years, five feet five. “You are so childish,” she complained.

“Men are,” said Mr. Waring. “That’s why women like ’em.”

Mademoiselle Florian’s stateliness passed into dimples. “Oh, you can’t,” she gurgled somewhat obscurely; “you can’t. Oh, but I suppose you do.”

“I can do most things,” Mr. Waring blandly assured her.

“But you can’t possibly think you’re a man.”

“I can make you glad that I am——” Mr. Waring proposed to embrace her.

Mademoiselle Florian retired swiftly. “I shall certainly be glad to see you grow up,” she confessed, with malicious mirthful eyes; “but I doubt if you’ll grow

up a man." She started forward and swung Mr. Waring round to the mirror. "You see, you are so like a girl."

Mr. Waring's delicate face of rose pink and pearl looked out of the mirror. It annoyed Mademoiselle Florian by not being annoyed. It even began to smile.

"You are like a girl. You know you are like a girl," she cried angrily.

"I'm sure I should be a credit to either sex," said Mr. Waring, and patted his curly brown hair. "And it is dull to belong to the same sex always. Have you noticed that, Madeleine? Wouldn't you like to be my husband part of the time?"

"Sir," said Mademoiselle Florian through dimples, "you shall be a sister to me."

"I do everything thoroughly," said Mr. Waring, and, before she was aware, kissed her sisterly-wise on both cheeks and fled.

In the hall he came upon Marie, the maid. "Marie," said Mr. Waring, "have you a petticoat to sell?"

"Heaven, sir!" Marie gasped.

"No, Marie. Not heaven: it is not for sale. Not heaven. There are doubtless many petticoats there, but I want one on earth." He was preparing, you see, to be a thorough sister.

\* \* \* \* \*

The morning was grey over the dank vineyards of Bregailon. Like ants a host of men were toiling in the hillside. They had energy, those soldiers of Revolution. Among them, ubiquitous, vigilant, moved Bonaparte. His clothes were stained with the soil, his livid cheeks bore dark furrows beneath the eyes.

"Aha," says General Cartaux, approaching, "our Captain Cannon has a dissipated air. Were you sober last night, my Captain Cannon?"

Bonaparte drew himself up and saluted. "My general," he cried, "I was drunk with love of my country." That was aimed at the great heart of the common soldier.

It hit the white. Enthusiasm murmured through the earthworks. There came a roar, "Long live our Captain Cannon!"

Bonaparte improved the occasion. "General!" he cried, "my face is weary because I have not slept; but my soul can never be weary working for France."

Again he won ardent cries from the digging soldiers: "Our Captain Cannon! Our brave little Captain Cannon!"

General Cartaux stalked magnificent over the sodden banks of earth. "Look you, my Captain Cannon," said he, shaking a wise head, "I do not approve these batteries."

"That is a pity, my general," said Bonaparte, drily.

His eyes wandered from Cartaux to a half-company beginning a new abutment. The angle did not please him. He shouted a sharp order and gesticulated violently.

There was a trim slip of a peasant girl hawking raisins among the men. She dared to laugh at him. Bonaparte's eyes dwelt upon her. He did not approve of being laughed at.

General Cartaux tugged his sleeve. "Attend to me, Captain Cannon. I do not understand your batteries. I do not approve them."



"That is very logical of you, my general."

"They are hidden. They are masked. They will not be able to fire."

"Wait and see, my general."

"I say, sir," cried his general, irate, "I say they will not be able to fire. I say it. I, Cartaux!"

Bonaparte's desire to abolish the General Cartaux became ardent. His eyes fell again upon that peasant maid who was selling many raisins; she was a pretty girl, and giving many smiles. She had come close to them.

"Now, my Captain Cannon," Cartaux continued in masterful tones, "we will have another council about this. You will call a halt here, and——"

"Hush, my general, hush!" Bonaparte laid finger on lip and nodded mysteriously towards the girl. "She followed you. She hangs on your words. I misdoubt she is an aristocrat spy."

General Cartaux, a famous admirer of women, examined her critically. Then, magnificently threatening, he strode up to her.

Bonaparte hurried about his business. The obstructions of General Cartaux were abolished for a while; perhaps—already a scheme was conceived in the Corsican brain—perhaps for ever.

By the time General Cartaux arrived at the peasant maid her back was turned to him; she was entirely interested in selling raisins.

General Cartaux tapped her slim shoulder. "Look at me, girl," said he.

The girl started round in violent surprise, showing him a fair, innocent face. "Oh, what a pretty soldier!" she cried. Then shyly dropped her eyes. "But I ought

not to look at you," she murmured, and modest fingers fidgeted with her skirt.

General Cartaux threw out a complacent chest. "And why not, lass?"

"Because you prevent me thinking of raisins, sir," said the girl meekly.

General Cartaux had an enviable ability for construing all remarks as flattery. He smirked. "Follow me, girl!" said he.

"I am sure so fine a gentleman can do me no ill," said the girl, and tripped after Cartaux's strides.

General Cartaux came into his hut, disposed himself in a chair of comfort, and beckoned the girl. She came timidly, with downcast eyes. General Cartaux put a finger under her round, white chin, and tilted her face up.

Dark blue eyes laughed at him. "I like my face," she said. "Don't you, sir?"

"What is more to the point, my dear," said General Cartaux, "is, do you like mine?"

"Oh, I would not presume, sir," the girl cried.

General Cartaux put his resplendent arm round her. She twisted away from him, skirts flying wide.

"That is very modest and becoming, my dear," said General Cartaux. "But I know you would like to come back to it;" and he held out the arm for her. He was, as they say, *toujours prêt*.

The girl considered him with her head on one side.

"Come, child," quoth Cartaux, "I can see that you like me."

"Oh, yes, sir, I like you," said the girl readily. "You remind me of my grandfathers."

Cartaux started up with an oath. He was old





In the Doorway Stood the Citizen Representative Salicetti

enough to be very touchy about his youthful beauty. "Do not mock at me, girl!" he thundered. "Do not dare play with me, or I will have you hanged for a spy."

"A spy?" cried the girl in the amazement of innocence? "I, sir? Oh, heaven, I protest I am only poor Jeanne Poisson with raisins to sell. See, such fine raisins!" She put her basket under Cartaux's nose. "And you may have one to taste."

Cartaux shook his finger at her. "Look you, I suspect you are a spy."

"Oh, but I should not know how," cried the girl reproachfully.

Cartaux took her basket away, caught hold of her, and drew her close. "Now, my dear, let the pretty lips tell the truth. Come! There was never a woman who would not tell her all for Cartaux's kisses." He bent over her. She objected with full maidenly vigour. . . .

"I see that our General Cartaux has begun a new siege." The remark came from the doorway. In the doorway stood the citizen representative, Salicetti.

Cartaux jumped round. Salicetti beckoned him out. Cartaux went in a hurry, calling for a sentry to stand by the door of his hut.

The girl, left alone, sat down in Cartaux's comfortable chair and emitted a hearty oath. Mr. Midshipman Waring had that deplorable habit in moments of stress.

In the appearance of Salicetti you have to admire Bonaparte's strategy. The citizen representative had come bustling about the new batteries, and, after the manner of his kind, beset Bonaparte with a thousand futile questions. Bonaparte, divining a way to get rid of him, saw how that way could assist in the aboli-

tion of General Cartaux. He was always economical, M. Bonaparte.

It had ever been the conviction of General Cartaux that the garrison of Toulon was likely to make a sally toward the east. Bonaparte, who knew well that an eastward sally was as likely as a midnight sun, told Salicetti mysteriously that he had espied through his glass strange movements to eastward, and suggested that Salicetti should go with General Cartaux to the eastern wing and reconnoitre. The citizen representative's genius, he pointed out, would inform Cartaux's professional skill. Salicetti purred assent. He would go—certainly he would go. Where was General Cartaux? General Cartaux, Bonaparte replied, was in his hut examining a spy, but Bonaparte had no doubt that the spy's examination could wait. After they had made reconnaissance it would perhaps be well to lay the results before a council. The thought of a council, the prospect of making a speech, set the citizen representative's zeal aflame. He commended Bonaparte's sagacity with exuberance and hurried off to Cartaux.

With a curious mocking smile Bonaparte turned again to his batteries. He had swept the camp bare of men, and the host that toiled in the rent hillside throbbed with his own passionate energy. Cunningly masked by the fall of the ground from the watchers on the English redoubt his serried works grew. The good people of Toulon, happily ignorant that there was a Napoleon Bonaparte in the world, were giving a ball to the English fleet.

Captain Carew had the honour to dance with Mademoiselle Florian. With Mademoiselle Florian, a lithe maiden form in ungirt robe of silver, Captain Carew

paced through the ante-rooms. Captain Carew had been fencing for compliments.

"Why, sir," said Mademoiselle Florian, amid dimples, "when I make a world it will be all women. But I like the officers of your navy well. They are, next to women, the most amiable of creatures. There are not enough of you, though, and some have played us false to-night."

Captain Carew explained that some miserable wretches were on duty.

"Oh, duty!" Mademoiselle Florian shrugged her pleasing shoulders at it. "That is the worst of being a man. He always has duty. There is a M.—M. Waring, I think—my mother wishes to see. Is he dutiful, sir?"

"Waring?" Captain Carew frowned officially. "Waring is one of my midshipmen. He has been missing a day and a half. Some portentous scrape, the young rascal."

Mademoiselle Florian dropped Captain Carew's arm and stood very straight and still, her golden eyes wide. She remembered suddenly Mr. Waring's promise to take snuff with the *sans-culottes*. . . . It was not a joke then. . . .

"Missing? Scrape?" she repeated in a low voice. "You do not know where he is?"

"Lord, not I," said the flag-captain.

Mademoiselle Florian's eyes glowed like flame. "Ah, you do not know!" she cried scornfully. "You send him alone against that army—a boy like him—while all you men are playing. Then you sneer because he is taken. Oh, you are brave, you are noble, you are manly!" She sped away in a whirl of rage.

Captain Carew, wholly amazed, stared after her. "The devil!" he remarked, and mopped his face.

Captain Nelson of the *Agamemnon* passed by. "What, Carew, taken aback?" quoth he with a smile.

"Egad, I've been reprimanded and dismissed my ship," said Captain Carew. "And hang me if I know what for."

Mademoiselle Florian had left the ball behind. Mademoiselle Florian had hurried home. With Mr. Waring in the bloody hands of the *sans-culottes* it was necessary to do something at once. I know she did not stop to think if she loved him, or how—perhaps she did not understand love very well, that child of seventeen; but she yearned to help him as a mother yearns for her son. . . . I fancy her standing before her glass, a slim boyish form. She knew well enough what a woman must dread in the *sans-culotte* army. But a boy—a boy might dare.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although there was nothing to see on the eastern flank, Cartaux and Salicetti had contrived to see something and to disagree about it marvellously. Cartaux, whose temper was poor, had, in fact, become very curt to the citizen representative, and rejected gruffly an invitation to discuss the matter further in Salicetti's quarters. "I have other things to do than listen to speeches," he growled, and strode off to his own hut.

Salicetti looked sourly. "That wench he had," said he to himself, and sought out the other citizen representatives to summon a council.

General Cartaux, who had every intention of finding his raisin girl more amusing than the citizen repre-



sentatives, came to his hut and blithely bade the sentry stand a score paces off, and plunged in.

Now the raisin girl—that is to say, Mr. Midshipman Waring—at first tried her charms upon the sentry, failed, and seeing the hopelessness of attempting to fight him, went philosophically to sleep in General Cartaux's chair. General Cartaux awoke the maid with a kiss.

"The devil!" she cried, starting up. General Cartaux happily had no English.

General Cartaux laughed and rubbed his hands. "That is the beginning of the campaign, my dear," said he.

She fled round the table. General Cartaux pursued her, caught her, and came with her full into the arms of Salicetti's clerk. General Cartaux swore. The clerk grinned.

"The citizen representatives require your immediate presence at a council, General," said he.

General Cartaux consigned him and the citizen representatives to perdition, cried, "*A bientôt*, then, my dear," to the breathless Mr. Waring, snatched up his hat, and strode out. He forgot to tell the sentry to close on the hut again.

Which was observed by Bonaparte. Bonaparte had every man he could muster to work on Bregailon Hill, and the work was going well. Captain Cannon, with his fiery energy and his theatricalities, had won the heart of the *sans-culottes*. They toiled like fiends. Bonaparte could spare an hour for the abolition of General Cartaux. As the shadows darkened on that December afternoon he loitered about the empty camp with his huge servant, Jean Dortan.

To Jean Dortan he confided a high and noble pur-

pose. "I am minded to save a maid from a beast, Jean," said he, in the tones of the stage. "That Cartaux, he has haled away a poor girl to his hut, charging her as a spy. Bah! No more spy than you. 'Tis a general of France uses his power to ruin her maids. Help me then, Jean!"

"I will wring his neck," quoth Jean, "if you please."

"First, we will get the maid away. Then I will break M. Cartaux. It will be amusing. Ah!" He recoiled with Jean into black shadow as Cartaux bustled out after the clerk. "That sentry! can you stun him unseen, Jean?"

"Bagatelle," quoth Jean Dortan, and slid off noiseless in the gloom. He made a circuit; he approached the sentry from behind, struck with a knife-hilt upon his temple, caught the man as he swayed, and laid him, musket and all, quietly down. Then he hurried after Bonaparte to Cartaux's hut.

Bonaparte had come full upon Mr. Waring, who, peering to see where the sentry was, had with amazement seen him stunned. Bonaparte caught Mr. Waring's feminine arm. "Child, you must away," he hissed. "Your honour is in dire peril."

"La, indeed, sir, is it?" says Mr. Waring, the innocent maid.

"Away, away!" Bonaparte caught up a cloak of Cartaux's and muffled her in it. "Set her safe beyond the lines, Jean. Seek your home, child. God knows what hell waits you here." He hurried one way through the empty camp, and Jean Dortan whirled Mr. Waring another.

They went at a speed very harassing in skirts. At last, on the lower ground far beyond the huts, Jean Dortan gripped Mr. Waring's hand with a "Hie away

home, lass. God give you ever a friend in trouble," and hurried back.

Mr. Waring sat down plump to recover his breath and laugh. "Phew! And I thought I was mad myself," said he. "But this is God's own large luck. What a sweet girl you must be, Mr. Waring! And how do the dear creatures live in petticoats?" With which he began to struggle out of them and stood up a lad again.

Then, eating raisins, he thought about things. If you suppose him merely thankful to be out of trouble you do not understand Mr. Midshipman Waring. He was consumed with interest in what he had seen in the morning, those new vast works on Bregailon Hill. He wanted to see more of them. Instead of hurrying back to the yearning gunroom of H.M.S. *Victory*, Mr. Waring went into a haystack and there slept comfortably as a mouse.

The council of war was met in the farmhouse kitchen. Salicetti and Cartaux were wrangling over the significance of what they had not seen when Bonaparte stalked in and sat himself down behind Salicetti's ear. The whole council was consumed with anxiety to know what the English were attempting on the east. Bonaparte, who knew well that they could do nothing at all, joined sagely in the debate. He wished to point out to the citizen representatives that there was a means of knowing the English plans. He had caught a spy that morning and handed her to General Cartaux. She——

"Ah, General Cartaux's spy!" Salicetti turned upon Cartaux a vicious smile. "I know that General Cartaux has examined her."

Cartaux gave out some oaths and protested that she was only a fool of a girl.

"The chief of the artillery considered her a spy. I move that the spy come before us," said Salicetti.

The prospect of trying a woman was attractive to the council. Off went a guard to Cartaux's hut. They returned to relate that spy there was none, but only a stunned sentry.

In amazement the council regarded General Cartaux, but Salicetti laughed. "I am sure she paid for her freedom, my general," said he.

Cartaux started up, purple of face, to demand what he meant.

"Mean? By the Republic, I mean this, that when I find you playing with a she-spy for her kisses and that she-spy is let escape, I know who has been traitor to France."

Cartaux roared like a bull. He had not let the wench escape. He had left her in his hut with a sentry over her. Especially and particularly it was to be understood that he was in no way a traitor.

Then Gasparin, who seems to have been no knave nor wholly a fool, took the word and desired to know why General Cartaux had kept the woman in his hut instead of sending her to the provost-marshal.

General Cartaux made an oration dealing with Fabius and Scipio Africanus, at the close of which Salicetti produced his clerk to relate that he had found General Cartaux with the woman in his arms, and the sentry, restored to animation, told that General Cartaux had ordered him to stand forty paces off the hut.

It was Barras, the impatient Provençal, who broke out: "Enough! Enough! We are not imbecile, if he is a traitor!" and already he was writing the *arrêté* that suspended Cartaux from his functions and "con-

signed him to the Committee of Public Safety at Paris, under good and sure escort."

The citizen representatives signed and sealed, while poor Cartaux bellowed like a bull. Bellowing still, he was led out under guard, and his own men glared and growled at him. They were a little hysterical about treachery, the *sans-culottes*.

Bonaparte had abolished his general. There was no man over him now. He would have his will. To him Toulon would fall. He knew himself fairly upon the path to glory and power. He stood in the clear night air looking up at the stars, white points of light in a black void. He smiled at the universe. In the face of heaven he saw himself greater than man.

Through the grey of the morning Mr. Waring came creeping round Bregailon Hill. Already the *sans-culottes* were at toil. Mr. Waring puckered his innocent brow upon the sight. Hidden with infinite cunning from the gunners in the English redoubt, batteries were terraced round the shoulder of the hill. They dominated the harbour. And amid them stood furnaces to heat the balls red hot, and already the guns were being hauled to position. For one moment Mr. Waring felt something like fear. The energy that had wrought so vastly and so swiftly, the brain that had planned the craft of it all, held him in amaze. More serious than he had ever been in his life he went stealthily on. He found more batteries, and still more batteries. All the hill was the masked home of death. He crept about in the trenches and behind abutments, listening to the workers' talk. He heard his friend General Cartaux abused, and chuckled. With peculiar joy he learnt that Cartaux was under arrest for letting him escape.

Once again the world amused him, and he went on in midshipman's spirits. Till suddenly a voice thrilled through him. "Wouldn't the English like to know what you are doing?" it said, and it gave a queer, nervous laugh. "I suppose none of them dare come and see?"

"Madeleine Florian!" Mr. Waring, peeping over the earthwork, saw that full, fine-wrought face. Madeleine Florian as a boy! Mr. Waring was between swearing and laughing.

The *sans-culotte* answer came with a hoarse chuckle. "Faith, my brave, we eat what English we catch."

"They—they are horrible, aren't they?" (Mr. Waring caught the nervous tremor of her voice.) "And have you caught any English, then?"

"Who are you that talks of English?" came sharply. Mr. Waring saw again that little man of the huge, sallow head—his saviour. Bonaparte was glowering at Mademoiselle Florian. "Come you here. Who are you?"

She was glib. She was Jacques Drac, a fisherman's son of La Seyne, who had come to see the soldiers at work. It was fine to see——

The keen, grey eyes cut through her. "You have too much to say, Jacques Drac. You——"

Mr. Waring dropped over the earthwork. He tapped Bonaparte's arm. "Concerning that stunned sentry," said he.

Bonaparte's sallow face darkened. He started round upon Mr. Waring, his eyes like sparks of lightning. "Who are you, rascal?" he growled.

Mr. Waring grinned amiably. "Can't you guess?" said he. "Now concerning that stunned sentry——"

Bonaparte gripped his arm (Mr. Waring bore the mark a week) and hurried him off, while he looked back, and smiling at Mademoiselle Florian, nodded her to follow. So the three drew away from the workers.

“What is it you want?” growled Bonaparte.

“I only want to say good-bye,” said Mr. Waring, jerked himself free, took Mademoiselle Florian’s arm, and marched off.

Bonaparte stared after them, biting his lip. Then a queer, cruel smile came in his eyes, and he ran back. He called a sergeant, pointed out the two speeding down hill, and bade him take a firing party.

Not for the last time the vengeful Corsican blood brought him trouble. The English redoubt, which could see nothing, heard the crackle of musketry and fired upon the sound. A storm of shell came dropping down upon Bonaparte’s cunning works, and flashed and thundered its mission of death. Here the loose earth slid roaring like an avalanche and buried yelling wretches alive, and there they lay mangled in their blood. The grey light was rent with lurid flame, and dimmed in bitter, dark smoke. Mad tumult possessed the *sans-culottes*. They ran hither and thither like frightened, furious beasts, and still the storm of shell beat down.

Bonaparte broke through the panic. All had gone far other than he meant. He was taken unawares and unready. But the unforeseen ever found him at his greatest. Through the frenzied, yelling throng he broke to the battery nearest the redoubt. His sharp voice cut across the din. In a moment he had men tearing frantically to bring guns to the empty emplacements. He gave the range. He answered fire

with fire. And the while through the mad hurry, through the turmoil of slaughter, he sent curt orders that set his men to work again all round the hill. He was absolute now by right divine. The new plan for the new need had been made on the instant. He would hold the redoubt's fire with his one battery, and all day long his men should toil at the rest till, with the night, in the dark, he was ready to whelm the English fleet in a sudden vast tempest of red-hot shot.

But the English, having after long days found something to fire at, fired mightily. The one battery was soon a reeking, ghastly mound of dead. New gunners shrank from that siege perilous.

Then Bonaparte sprang upon the breastwork, flaunting his life in the storm. "Do you shrink, then?" he cried. "Nay, vie for the honour! Come, my children, come. This is the Battery of Men without Fear." And at that, with a roaring round of cheers for their Captain Cannon, the gunners surged forward, and fought for the chance of death.

Bonaparte sat himself calmly down by an abutment, and called for pen and ink and paper and sandbox, and a sergeant that could write, and in the mist of that thunderous slaughter began to dictate a missive to Salicetti. The sergeant wrote leaning on the breastwork. A shell from the redoubt plunged into the earth hard by, and bursting, hurled the sergeant prone, and smothered him and Bonaparte with dust. The sergeant rose again with a laugh, and shook the dust from the letter. It had dried the ink.

"Good," says he. "We shall spare our sand."

Bonaparte smiled at him. "Your name, sergeant?"



“Junot, sir.”

“I shall remember it. And you shall not forget me. Come, my children, come! More men for the Battery of the Men without Fear.”

“Captain Cannon! Our Captain Cannon!” New gunners dragged the dead away to make room for themselves to die.

So the Battery of the Men without Fear held the redoubt's fire, and away beyond in the cunningly masked galleries and terraces of the hill the *sans-culottes* toiled fiercely to make ready for the bombardment that should surprise and sink the English fleet. So, prodigal of the lives of men, Bonaparte matured his plan.

But with that plan Mr. Midshipman Waring was also concerned. You left him speeding down the hill with Mademoiselle Florian—neither was beautified by petticoats—while musket bullets whinged about their ears. Mr. Waring, who had studied the hill with some care, made for a spot where the gentle full-bosomed slope of it changed suddenly to a sharp descent. Down that steep place Mademoiselle Florian and he went without dignity, while the bullets thudded into the ground above. They were out of sight and range a moment. Then the howitzers of the redoubt began to roar, and the *sans-culottes* had no more leisure to think of Mr. Waring.

Mr. Waring caught Mademoiselle Florian's arm, and with heavy steps checked the pace to a walk. Then, “Madeleine, my dear,” says he, and between the roar of the shells his voice came strained and unsteady. “Oh, Madeleine, my dear, my darling!”

Madeleine Florian gave a queer high-pitched laugh.

"Dont, oh, please dont!" she cried, "joke to me." me."

Mr. Waring's hand ceased to quiver, and came closer about her arm. He drew a long breath. . . . "When I saw myself in petticoats, I saw the girl I could love, dear. Unfortunately I had so many rivals for my affections. Now I know why I was made a man. I should have convulsed the male world if I had been a woman. But, of course, it would have been very good for you. For you would then have had a superior of your own sex. And you would have had a chance to learn those habits of subordination and discipline which prevent any one from being a charming wife, and are characteristically nauseating in a husband." Beneath her rough boy's coat the girl's bosom was tremulous, tears were wet on her cheeks, and again and again she bit her lip. Mr. Waring continued to be fluently mad, to the tune of the roaring guns.

They were near Toulon town before she stopped suddenly, and half turned to him, and smiling like a spring morning, caught his hand. "You always understand," she whispered. "You do just, just right. And now do not talk any more at all."

There was a crowd of the good folks of Toulon watching the battle of the guns, gaily as though it were a show of fireworks. With Madeleine's hand in his, Mr. Waring, supernaturally grave, brought her through the crowd and home.

Then, leaving her with a horrified mother, he hurried to his ship. My Lord Hood was in the stern walk with his flag-captain. Mr. Waring approached from behind. "Come on board, sir," said he.

The two jumped.

"The devil!" cried my Lord Hood.

"No, sir," said Mr. Waring. "He is with the *sans-culottes*;" and he told his tale, told of Bonaparte and those vast hidden batteries. . . .

My Lord Hood began to bite his left thumb; then he bit his left forefinger as well. . . . And so he began to mumble dictation to Captain Carew . . . the first English admiral who played a hand with Bonaparte.

The flagship wreathed herself in strings of bunting. The signalmen of the fleet began to be very busy. Boatswains' pipes twittered on every forecastle. It was "hands to the capstan." Anchors came apeak. Under light sail the English fleet drew out of the inner harbour. My Lord Hood was not to be surprised that day; but Toulon town watched him go with amazed and fearful eyes.

The fleet was hardly clear of L'Eguillette when, aboard the *Agamemnon*, "Signal from the flag, sir," says the signal midshipman to Captain Nelson. Captain Nelson had seen it. He was smiling and rubbing his lean hands. The *Agamemnon* went about, and running close in shore, fired her broadside up at Bregaillon Hill, and, neatly handled, went about again and gave another broadside to those hidden batteries. It was too much for the *sans-culottes*. Every gun in position let drive at the daring ship. The whole hillside flamed and was lost in smoke. With her foresail in tatters, with her mizzen-topmast lopping like a broken wing, Captain Nelson brought the *Agamemnon* out of range.

There was no doubt now. It was time to go. But my Lord Hood was not in a hurry. He paced the quarter-deck chewing his left thumb and mumbling signals. A whole flotilla of cutters dropped down to the water.

Captain Sidney Smith came to the flagship, spoke for three minutes with his admiral, saluted extravagantly (that was his way), and went over the side and led the flotilla shoreward. Captain Sidney Smith was to seize all shipping, embark all the good folk of Toulon who had no mind to become *sans-culottes*, blow up the arsenal. Then my Lord Hood mumbled more orders, and the *Victory* led the line back into the inner harbour and joined battle with the hill of Bregaillon. Sea and grey sky flamed to the flame of the guns, and the air beat in waves of thunder.

Bonaparte was disappointed. That fleet had weighed anchor too soon. Not now could it be caught helpless and fired and sunk; but it could be driven away—Toulon could still be taken. Over the quaking earth of the hillside Bonaparte moved, spreading through all the army that fierce, indomitable energy that surged in his own soul. It was his hour. He breathed force into men like a god, and with strength hardly human the *sans-culottes* toiled to do his will. They had every battery armed, they served the guns at wondrous speed, they offered themselves eager to death so Captain Cannon's will were done. And never man saw such a tempest of fire.

Against the redoubt on L'Eguillette Bonaparte led a storming party, and though its guns blasted whole files of men away, through the embrasures broke the *sans-culottes* and drove out the English at the push of bayonet. Captain Cannon led. Then he turned the guns of L'Eguillette on the English fleet too, and beat it farther away. "My children, children of fire," cried Bonaparte, clear amid the roar, "glory is ours and the praise of France. To-morrow we sleep in Toulon."

And the tempest grew and grew, and the *sans-culottes* heated their shot red, and ever and again an English ship was rent in flame. But they kept the flames down, and, hovering all but out of range, fired back as best they might, while behind their guardian line a stream of craft bore the good folk of Toulon away to the safety of the roadstead. And night fell, and tireless still the *sans-culottes* kept up their fire, and tireless the English seamen answered. A mountain of lurid flame stood against the sky, and ships that flamed from fore-castle to stern moved on the black water. Then from the quay, from the arsenal of Toulon, belched a volcano of fire, and over town and hill and harbour came the glaring light of ruin. Through that grim glory the English fleet moved stately to the calm gloom of the sea. England had done her best. Bonaparte had won the first game.

And that is how Captain Cannon took Toulon. But I give some of his glory to the midshipman. And I like to remember how one night, as the fleet was beating down the Spanish coast, laden with French exiles from France, my Lord Hood passed the word for Mr. Waring. Mr. Waring was with Mademoiselle Florian behind a carronade when the marine found him. "Tell the admiral," said he, "that Mr. Waring is at his devotions."

## CHAPTER IV

### HOW HE SOUGHT LOVE

THE triumph of Toulon exalted the hearts of the philanthropists of Paris. In the Convention the Citizen Robespierre rose to move that a Supreme Being should exist. He had not much humour, that bilious Citizen Robespierre. No one was so rash as to tell him so. They shut their eyes to the ludicrous, ghastly madness of it, and voted for the immediate creation of a Supreme Being. It was the fine flower of the Revolution, a god by act of Parliament, a god born of Robespierre. But some of the Jacobins smiled sideways.

There was an artillery officer at Sablons whose heart was exalted too, not by victory, but by a woman. Chief of Brigade Bonaparte had met the Citizeness Beauharnais, a woman with all the virtues of an animal. If you pity him for nothing else, you may pity him for what he was fated to love.

A fête was decreed in honour of Robespierre's offspring. "A sea of flowers," they tell you, "drowned Paris. Every window had its garland or its flag," and the Citizen Robespierre put on a sky-blue coat. It was decent to be fine on his god's birthday. "Streams of people, rivers of flowers," flowed to the garden of the Tuileries. Thither the Citizen Robespierre, bearing a bouquet of wheat and flowers, led his obedient sheep, the members of the Convention. He marched in front, in state, alone, the bilious little man. But some of

the sheep looked at him queerly. "Even creating god one should be modest," said Tallien in Carnot's ear.

In the midst of the vast throng stood statues of Atheism, Anarchy, and Egoism, hideous as *sans-culotte* art could make them, appalling to the eye. There also was a rostrum, and upon it the members of the Convention crowded. It was not big enough. They were vilely uncomfortable. They murmured against Robespierre's god. The Citizen Robespierre explained in an oration how beautiful a god he had made, but the Citizen Robespierre's voice was small, and the winds of heaven strong, and they bore his recipe away. He took a torch and went forward, sky-blue and strutting, to fire those horrific statues. Robespierre putting a torch to Egoism—it is one of the great scenes of the world's comedy. Egoism and Atheism and Anarchy (they were well steeped in turpentine) flamed nobly, and in the midst of the flames uprose with creaking machinery a larger, fairer statue . . . the Supreme Being, . . . incombustible, at least, if smutty . . . as strange an idol as ever man's madness made. But they worshipped. There were hymns and processions and dances, and ardently all the people worshipped this strange god. Long lord of life and death in France, Robespierre was lord at that hour of the soul and hope and faith. One pities him.

For making a god he did not stay the Terror one day. Ere that summer sun set the prisons heard a double tale of those whom the guillotine should claim at dawn. For making a god no Jacobin was robbed of his due debauch. That night Barère gave a dinner at the Restaurant Méot, and Robespierre was there, and Couthon the cripple, and Henriot, and St. Just,

and Billaud, and Fréron, and Carnot. The table in the green room was strewn with roses. Barère had some skill in dining. After the patties of Reuen veal came Gascon partridges, cooked in a manner of his own with scraps of Bayonne ham. For drink he gave them a flood of '79 champagne. And yet the Jacobins were not harmonious. Robespierre must still be preaching of his Supreme Being, and his sermon was not gay. Henriot and St. Just, indeed, devout disciples, listened earnestly; but Carnot yawned, and Fréron groaned, and Billaud shrugged his round shoulders and fidgeted. Poor Barère, who liked a sermon as little as any man, unless he were the preacher, tried to make Robespierre drunk; but Robespierre, unfortunately, had no vices, and his sermon seemed likely to be as continuous as the force of gravitation. The air was close, and the Jacobins grew heavy and hot with wine. St. Just was first to throw off his coat, and the others did likewise. Still the sermon went on. Barère (who was growing desperate) cut it off a moment to say that he had sent for a dancer who was "Cypris herself." Let them take the wine to the silver room and watch her. They went eagerly; but Robespierre followed, and, while the girl postured for them, he must still be explaining how he made his Supreme Being. Then Billaud, who had drunk perhaps enough, snapped at him. "Oh, you bore me with your Supreme Being!"

It was a challenge to Robespierre's empire. The little man stopped short. You see him turn on Billaud, his bilious face drawn, red specks growing in the white of his eyes. Then he went on with his sermon again.

Carnot was first to fly. He made heartburn from the white wine his excuse; but Billaud winked at him



and chuckled. In the outer room seeking his coat it happened that he took Robespierre's instead. It felt strangely. He put his hand in the pocket and found a paper. It was in Robespierre's writing. He read the title, "Traitors to Fraternity," and beneath it Tallien's name and Barras's and his own. Robespierre's god was nothing, but Robespierre's hate was to fear. Carnot hurried away.

Madame Tallien's salon was gay. You see her, the lovely dark woman, Diana's form draped in ungirt diaphanous rose dress. Her little white sandalled foot peeps out, and there is gold about her slim right ankle and a ring of gold on one tiny toe. Madame Tallien leads the assault of womanhood upon the Terror. Beside her is one in the springtime of a noble beauty, white as her shimmering white robe—the child whom Récamier has just wed. There beyond, where Barras lingers, is ripe loveliness. She sits at her ease, clad in silver, gracious, careless of Barras and all the world, plainly sufficient to herself. The full red lips, the warm life of her cheek, the velvet darkness of her eyes, wake a man's pulse with longing. It is Josephine de Beauharnais.

Barras is talking love, and she looks up with that slow mysterious smile—the smile of woman's power. He is mighty fine, the Citizen Barras, a tall, alert figure, with a square-tailed coat in stripes of white and sea-green and cherry-coloured breeches and sea-green stockings clocked with red. But all the men dazzle. Fouché's sinister face rises above a peach-coloured stock. Tallien has his fox-coloured hair plaited over the temples and knotted back, and his coat is three shades of green and his stockings yellow.

“Chief of Brigade Bonaparte!” Into the splendour a lean little man, his uniform shiny and dingy and darned. His head, that great neckless head with the lank, untidy brown hair, is plainly too big for him. “Chief of scarecrows!” says Tallien, with a sneer and a shrug and a stare. There was but one knew the threadbare little man. Barras has seen him take Toulon, but Barras had not dreamt of him in a drawing-room, and Barras stared with the rest.

Bonaparte strode up to Madame Tallien and saluted. Madame Tallien surveyed the strange little man with delectable mirth. “Citizeness!” he said, “citizeness of the country of beauty! I am your suppliant—for trousers.”

Madame Tallien made an ejaculation.

“Not to cover me,” he explained, looking down at his own lean legs, which were, indeed, covered with patches. “Citizeness, at Sablons three thousand of the soldiers of France cry out for trousers at least, and the Convention will vote them no inch of cloth, therefore, citizeness, I resort here. Here those who govern France”—he took in Tallien and Barras with one glance of his steel eyes—“come to be governed. Citizeness of beauty, give me trousers!”

“After all,” said the citizeness, “what has beauty to do with trousers?”

“Beauty, citizeness, loves bravery. Without trousers we cannot be brave.”

“Then are all women cowards?”

“Not in the least. What could be braver than to face life in petticoats?”

“You please me,” said Madame Tallien.

“It is what I intended to do,” said Bonaparte.

“And do you always do what you want with woman?”

"I make it a habit not to fail."

"But how tedious—oh, for the women, I mean! It would doubtless"—her quick eyes wandered from Bonaparte, for Carnot had come in in a hurry, and she saw him gather her husband and Barras and draw them away to an inner room—"it would doubtless"—distracted, she ended the sentence—"be wiser of me—to see you—no more."

"Many people," said Bonaparte, "will wish they had never seen me before I am done with the world."

Her eyes lingered on him a moment. He was surprising. But her thoughts were away. She rose. "Pray give me leave——"

"Certainly, citizeness"—Bonaparte made way—"but give me trousers."

Madame Tallien followed her husband.

Bonaparte was not well pleased with her. She had had the sense to be impressed by him, but also she had forsaken him for her husband. In that husband's doings, in the events of the last moment, Bonaparte also was interested. He wanted to know why Carnot came sweating with hurry, yet pale, to consult Tallien and Barras, and what the issue would be. But it was not that need that kept him prowling, dingy, unheeded, through that variegated throng, with the fierce, hungry eyes of a beast of prey. He sought some one.

Josephine de Beauharnais lay on a couch alone. Through the silver mist of her gown Bonaparte saw the full ripe beauty of her, very woman of very woman, womanhood itself.

The blood leapt dark to his brow. His eyes flashed and changed. A slow smile came. "Citizeness, I am your soldier," he said. "I have come for you."

"But I thought you came for trousers?"

He came closer. "You are mine," he said, in a low voice. She looked up with that little smile of hers—the smile of sex, mocking, mysterious. Bonaparte's eyes gleamed like stars of steel, the grim lines of jaw and brow stood gaunt. Josephine's smile quivered and faded out. She looked nervously from side to side like a frightened child.

"I claimed you from the hour we met. You are mine while your soul lasts."

"But I know nothing about you," she protested in a tone of injury.

"You know the soldier who wrenched your dead husband's sword from the butchers of the Temple."

"It is unkind to talk of my husband," said Josephine.

"I come now to lay my glory at your feet," said Bonaparte, and his voice was harsh and unsteady.

Josephine shrank away. He amazed and frightened her. She answered him with a weak laugh and a banality. "You are very generous, citizen."

"Generous?" cried Bonaparte. "Generous? Is it generous to give when giving is the soul's joy? It is all for you, citizeness—all that I win—the world full of power and glory."

"Oh, I can do without glory," said Josephine, with her light laugh. "It is happiness I want."

"Then you have only to love me. Abandon yourself, fling yourself into the arms of my soul. My being is only to bring you happiness. You were made to be mine. Accomplish your purpose, that is body's joy and soul's."

And all Josephine had to say, was: "Oh, but I do not think you ought, citizen." And then she directed

her eyes and his round the crowded salon. She could never forget propriety.

Bonaparte was beyond all that. From under his great, gaunt brow grey flame clove at her. He caught her wrist hard. "God! do you know how I am curbing myself?" he muttered hoarsely. "I am not a man, I am manhood—force—force; and you—you are not some woman, you are womanhood—the matter of life. I want you! Do you understand? I want you!"

"But you hurt me," said Josephine.

"It will please you to be hurt."

"Oh, will you let me go!" she cried, indignant.

"I shall never let you go. You are bound to me while we last!"

"After all," said Josephine, "you are very absurd. Are you not now an absurd citizen?" She gave that foolish light laugh of hers, and began to unclasp the brown grip on her wrist with coquettish fingers. "You see"—she patted his hand in playful punishment—"you know nothing—whatever—about me. And never will!" Smiling archly, she looked up at Bonaparte. But those fierce intent eyes of his were set on her form, her full ripe womanhood. . . . The smile froze on her lips. . . . She shivered a little.

Bonaparte's eyes flashed upon hers. "You are mine. My wife for me. You know it!"

She hid her face in her hands, quivering. "No!—no! You frighten me!" she muttered.

Bonaparte laid his hand on her bare shoulder. "I shall frighten you till your soul is one with mine," he said, in a low voice.

And while Josephine shrank away into the corner of the couch, "Captain Cannon!" said some one. "Cap-

tain Cannon!" It was the name Bonaparte had earned at Toulon. He turned and saw Barras at his elbow. "Interrupting your amour——" said Barras, grinning, and linked arms with him and walked him away.

Josephine raised herself with a dainty shudder and an "Ouf!" of relief. "Oh, but he is mad—and he is like an east wind!" said she, and with that shut the windows of her luxurious soul on him and went across the room to coquette with Carvoisin.

A while before Tallien and his wife and Barras and Carnot were met in the inner room. "I have been dining with Robespierre," says Carnot, still nearly breathless.

"Menu, sermon with sermon to follow," said Barras.

"My poor friend, take a pill," said Tallien.

"You had better joke to-night," quoth Carnot. "To-morrow you may not have heads." He turned on the woman: "Our Lady of Tallien, are you ready to follow Marie Antoinette?"

"I am more beautiful than she. And less virtuous. There is a man or two would fight for me." She smiled at him in the power of beauty. Then, with a grimace: "Eh, but he sickens me, that butcher! You must stamp upon him, Tallien!"

"Well," said Tallien, "and what is the Bilious planning now?"

"We have the honour to be his enemies, Barras and you and I"—and Carnot told of the paper in Robespierre's coat. Barras whistled, and Tallien looked glum.

"But, *Enfin!*" cried Madame Tallien, her dark eyes sparkling. "Ah, you must finish with him now! Thank God! I am weary to loathing of the blood."

Barras whistled again. "'Tis we or he in fact," he said.

"He will be the devil to finish with, our Bilious," muttered Tallien.

His wife turned on him, fierce, radiant, lovely. "Oh, that I were a man!" she cried.

"Then there would be some very unhappy women," said Tallien. "But what ails the Bilious with us?"

"I am not very obedient," said Carnot, with a grim smile, "and you make jokes. Well, what is to do?"

Tallien rubbed at the plaits of his fox-coloured hair. "There is more than one who does not love him for his Supreme Being," he said thoughtfully. "And he has long been a bore, our Bilious. It is not the way to be loved in France." They began to count names in the list of the Convention. . . .

Then Barras broke off with an "Ah, bah, what is a vote? The gendarmes are his, and the mob."

"And the army?" Carnot asked.

Barras checked his mouth half open and stood so, dumb. . . . Then, "I know the army a little. . . . Wait!" He went out to seek Bonaparte, . . . and found him, and took him to Madame Tallien's boudoir. Amiably he set a chair, and, "My dear Captain Cannon," says he, "it was you who took Toulon."

"I have not forgotten it," Bonaparte snapped, "though the Government has."

"Ah, I know that the Government has not rewarded you duly, and——"

"The Government has rewarded me damnably. Doubtless your recommendations have availed."

"My dear Captain Cannon," said Barras smoothly, "it is hard to make our Robespierre do anything for

the soldiers of France. But doubtless in their affections you have your reward."

"You will some day see how the soldiers of France will follow Bonaparte."

"Would that I could give you the chance to lead them! Alas, my friend! our dictator—faith, I forgot myself!—our Supreme Being, our Robespierre, has little honour for soldiers." Barras paused, his crafty brown eyes smiling genially. Bonaparte's face was of a sphinx. Barras became unselfishly indignant. "By the Republic! the soldiers of France are scurvily treated! We—we, their friends, are helpless. But I protest, I wonder they do not right themselves." Again he paused for a reply. Again Bonaparte failed to oblige him. But Barras was still amiable. "My dear Captain Cannon, I am glad you came here to-night. I wish you to be sure Barras does not forget your vast services to France. Barras is your friend—your friend, and the friend of the army. If you knew how I have urged the army's cause on the Committee of Public Safety! I shall move in it again, be assured. I shall not rest till the army has its rights."

"That is your duty," snapped Bonaparte; and Barras got no more out of him.

Nevertheless, when Barras went back to Tallien and Carnot, and Madame Tallien asked, "Well?"

"Not ill," said Barras, rubbing his hands. "It was the citizen that wanted trousers. And I think I know what else he wants. He can make soldiers fight, that citizen. A good tool. Leave the army to me." And then they began to talk intrigue, which, to be just, they well understood.

And so on the eve of Robespierre's god-making a



new plot began to form against Robespierre. What had he to fear? He had beaten down Brissot and Danton and Desmoulins. Never one on whom his hate fell had lived. What hope for these? Why, these knew how to be knaves.

The iconoclasts have said that Bonaparte also had that ability. Bonaparte had seen the mind of the amiable Barras legible as a book. The amiable Barras, he perceived, desired to rebel against the divinity of Robespierre, and was in need of soldiers to help him. It was then probable that the divine Robespierre would need soldiers to put down Barras. Bonaparte had no prejudices. He despised them both. He was ready to fight for either. It was desirable to be on sale to both. Then let them bid! With the morning he made a call on Robespierre.

Robespierre lodged in austere republican simplicity over a cabinet-maker's shop in the Rue St. Honoré. Bonaparte sat upon a mound of shavings and made friends with the cabinet-maker—he was always at ease with common folk—while Robespierre finished his morning coffee. When he was brought upstairs he found the bilious little man in a nankeen dressing-gown with Rousseau's "Confessions." Robespierre, who did not love soldiers, nodded stiffly to his salute. "Bonaparte. Chief of Brigade. From Sablons," said Bonaparte, military fashion.

"You ought to be at your post," said Robespierre peevishly.

"Even if I have no trousers?" said Bonaparte. "We have not many trousers at Sablons, citizen. I request that you would ask mother France to give us trousers."

Robespierre made an oration upon the Republic's right to claim the allegiance of her soldiers whatever they suffered.

"Oh, I come to assure you of my allegiance!" said Bonaparte.

"It is not to me you owe allegiance. It is to France," said Robespierre, and made another oration upon the moral obligation of the perfect soldier to fellow citizens, to the Government, to France.

Bonaparte bit down his impatience. The Citizen Robespierre was not amusing. But there was business to do. "To you our allegiance," he persisted, "since you are France. Citizen, it may be you have enemies"—he paused artistically. He saw Robespierre's eyelids flicker.

"I have had enemies," said Robespierre.

"Some perhaps live yet," said Bonaparte, dropping his voice.

Red spots came in Robespierre's eyes. "What do you mean?" he cried. "What do you know? Who are they?" The passion for suspicion and hate distorted his lean, bilious face.

"Who are the enemies of France, citizen? They are yours. You should know who are false to France. They are false to you."

Robespierre rocked himself together. His lean lips, drawn sideways, were twitching. He made a strange, hissing noise. "False to me!" he muttered. "I know them. One must strike!—strike! It is for Liberty! To root out the enemies of Liberty. It is the cause of Humanity! Strike!—strike! I know them, the traitors to Equal Fraternity. Their blood too!" Then he looked up and saw Bonaparte, and started, and began

to make an oration about tyrannicide and Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

Bonaparte heard it to the end. Then: "Citizen, the champions of Liberty are in danger sometimes. If you are in need, call me. I am a soldier. Bonaparte, Chief of Brigade. At Sablons. Where we want trousers." He saluted again with the soldierly air that Robespierre hated, and strode out. So he put himself up for sale.

The rag-pickers were busy still in the street as he tramped away. While he crossed the Place de la Révolution the guillotine began its day's work.

On the scaffold a girl stood white against the sunshine. Bonaparte saw her face moulded in a child's wonder at death. Her hands were bound behind her, the dress torn from her neck, but her dark hair hung heavy in the way of the knife. One of the executioner's journeymen jerked the tresses out and held them while another with shears hacked them off. And the child, writhing, shrieked, "Mamma, my mamma." A moment more and she was thrown down on the plank, and through the sunlight the broad knife flashed. . . . Her head was held up. The scanty crowd did not cheer; they criticised its beauty. Gaunt women knitting among the tumbrils beneath the scaffold grinned at each other. . . . And mothers and maids were cast under the knife, and men in their first strength, and cripples, and old men whose work was done, till the executioners were crimson hand and foot, and on those knitting women and the sodden earth fell a rain of blood . . . that the will of the bilious fanatic of forms and theories might be done. . . .

Bonaparte tramped on, close lipped, a thousand visions jostling behind that great dark brow.

Now Tallien and Carnot and Barras were up and at work, Tallien and Carnot moving swiftly from Jacobin to Jacobin, frightening, cajoling, bribing with promises. Barras had gone to Josephine de Beauharnais.

She kept him waiting an hour in the little drawing-room of the Rue Chantereine before she came down. Then she was daintily elaborate in a *déshabillé* of lace. She yawned at him. "See how I love you," said she. "For I hate to get up till the sun goes down." She held out white hands to him.

Barras took them, and took her in his arms. She resisted enough to make his kiss piquant. "You know how to be a woman," said he.

Josephine freed herself, and pruned her disordered feathers. "Ouf! men are hard," she said.

"All alike?" Barras grinned.

"If they had not different faces one would not know them apart."

"I was afraid you were taking some one else for me last night."

"How then?" Josephine's eyes were round in honest innocence. "What, the little soldier man? But, my friend, he is mad, quite mad!"

"That was love, my dear," Barras grinned.

"He said he was force—force"—she tried to imitate the brazen ring of Bonaparte's voice—"and I was the matter of life! Ouf!" she shuddered daintily.

"All love, my dear," quoth Barras.

"Then I know nothing about love." She lay back in luxurious ease, smiling at him. "And do you think that, my friend?"

Barras came and kissed her nose. "I think you are a charming toy, my dear. But one cannot always play." He stood over her, and his dark face set into serious cunning. "Listen now, my dear."

Josephine pouted. "But I hate to listen when I am told to."

"Do you want to listen to your head falling into the basket?"

Josephine shuddered, and grew pale. "You are horrible," she said, "and I hate you." She turned her back on him.

"If you are wise," said Barras thoughtfully, "there is no reason why you should be guillotined."

Josephine began to cry. "You are—you are perfectly—horrible."

"It is only necessary to love this Captain Cannon a little."

Josephine started round in amazement, her handkerchief half-way to her wet eyes. "Love him?" she gasped. "I should not know how. He is mad. He frightens me horribly."

Barras tapped her shoulder. "Listen, my dear. Do you want to die? Our Bilious, our Robespierre, he wants more blood. It is now Tallien and Our Lady of Tallien and me and all our dear friends. Well, we do not want to oblige him by dying. But he has the power, not we. We want a soldier to save us, and our little Captain Cannon is the man. He will not stand on ceremony. He can make men fight. But he is not the man to do things without pay. Well, you can pay him, my dear. Love him a little, and save your pretty neck and mine."

Josephine, who was crying gently at the thought that any one should be so unkind as to kill her, pro-

tested again. "But I do not know how to love him."

Barras laughed. "Pretend, then. You know how to do that, my dear. Come, do not be a fool! It is life or death for you and me. He'll not eat you. One man is much like another."

"He is not," Josephine wailed. "What am I to do with him?"

Barras still laughed. "If you've forgot how you make love to a man, I remember. Write him a pretty letter."

So, tearful, reluctant, Josephine wrote her first love letter to Bonaparte. Barras dictated it.

They had nearly done when Tallien broke in, red faced, his fox-coloured hair awry. "Barras! Ah, here you are at last! Do you know what the Bilious has done now? Thérèse is arrested!" Thérèse was his wife.

Barras whistled.

"Thérèse!" Josephine screamed. "Oh, my dear Thérèse, what shall I do? What shall I do?"

Barras turned on her. "Unless you want your dear Thérèse's head to play balls with yours, be a little fervent to our Captain Cannon."

And so that strange love letter ended in a most agitated hand thus:

"Come to me, then. You spoke to my heart last night. I am a friend who loves you.

"VEUVE BEAUHARNAIS."

"For our little Corsican gunner," Barras explained to the fuming Tallien. "Finish—Josephine. I will see that he has it. Come, Tallien!" and he thrust the letter into his pocket and drew Tallien away. "It is per-

haps a mistake of the Biliou," he said coolly. "There are many men beside you who love Our Lady of Tallien."

"Do you think so?" said her husband with some relief.

It was for that Robespierre condemned her. When Bonaparte left him with hate and suspicion spurred to rage in his soul, his first purpose was to have Tallien arrested. He hated Tallien for a fop who joked, a soft-hearted traitor who had guillotined but three hundred of all the guilty citizens of Bordeaux. But Tallien's wife he hated more. The dark Diana with her cult of loveliness and luxury and woman's grace—in her was the strongest foe of his grim, murderous rule. Womanhood and the power of womanhood were bitterly alien to the Terror. He saw that dimly, the little fanatic of theories, and at Madame Tallien, the leader of womanhood, he struck.

So, too, he would punish Tallien with worse than death. If Tallien bore it meekly—well. He might perhaps be pardoned. If he dared rebel, he also must die, after the pleasure of feeling his wife's death. That punishment would be exquisite. Robespierre was a connoisseur in emotions.

Tallien, whatever he was, was not that. He stormed into Robespierre's room snorting with decent, honest wrath. "You have arrested my wife, Robespierre!" he thundered. Robespierre blinked at him, did not trouble to deny it. "What is the charge, then?"

"That we shall hear at the trial, Tallien."

Tallien roared a great oath. "Trial? Little Biliou, do not think she will ever come to trial! I will raise France upon you. I will bring the army against you.

By my soul, I will move the world to crush you." He stopped, panting, inarticulate. "For the last time, Robespierre! Set her free, and I will spare you."

Robespierre blinked at him.

"For the last time, then, farewell. You have chosen death, little Biliou. So be it!" He went down the stairs, thundering.

*Le peuple en ce jour sans cesse repète  
Ah! ça ira! ça ira! ça ira!  
Suivant les maximes de l'Évangile  
Ah! ça ira! ça ira! ça ira!  
Du législateur tout s'accomplira  
Et qui s'abaisse on l'élèvera  
Ah! ça ira! ça ira! ça ira!*

To that tune the old regime had died; now it rang for the master of the Terror.

Robespierre gave a little shrug of one shoulder. He was not afraid. But something in Tallien's fervour startled his mind. It would be well to make sure of the army. He turned to the table and wrote a letter to that Chief of Brigade at Sablons. Then he went to council with his brother and St. Just and Henriot, the commandant of gendarmes.

All that day, Tallien, his fox-hair bristling in disorder, hurried from man to man, ardent, persuasive, inspired. He had Barras, that great manager of men, to help him, and Carnot dealing with the graver souls.

In his tent at Sablons Bonaparte had two letters. With one Robespierre announced his intention of moving that arrears of clothing and pay be made up to the army at once, and begged the Chief of Brigade to call



on him. Bonaparte smiled. "It appears things march in Paris," said he, and turned to his other letter.

Then the keen eyes flamed, and his brow was dark and hot. He started up, shouting for his horse. . . .

Josephine lay easily on a couch, the glory of her womanhood veiled in white. Beneath her bosom was a band of crimson. Diamonds sparkled, half hidden, in her black hair, and the red light of rubies came from the white hollow below her neck. In her wide, dark eyes, on her full lips, was that mocking mysterious smile. Away by the door stood Bonaparte, the little dingy man, his great gaunt brow dark with passionate blood—stood still as a man of bronze. . . . Then darted across the room and fell on his knee beside her couch and flung his arm across her bosom and held her hard while his eyes glared grey light. "My love, my life!" he cried harshly.

Josephine's smile died. She flushed and turned her head away, and looked at him again and turned again. "Oh, but you hurt me!" she complained.

Bonaparte laughed. "My beautiful, my sweet, my incomparable, love must hurt, such love as ours, and still we would be hurt more, and the hurt is joy." He grasped her against him with passionate strength, he covered her arm with fierce hot kisses.

Josephine tried to draw herself away. "Oh, but you must not!" she protested. "It is not right of you! Indeed you must not!"

"You are mine, mine altogether, mine eternally!" cried Bonaparte.

"Oh, I do not think it is like that!" said Josephine.

"You love me. I have it in your hand—that beautiful, that gracious hand"—he crushed it against his

lips—"this wrote that you love. There is but one way to love me. I will show you. Come!" He was drawing her to lie upon his breast.

"But no!—but no!" cried Josephine. "I should not like to."

"Come to me! You are mine! I give you all the need of a woman and all the world beside. Ah, I will show you how a man can love!" He grasped her to his breast, his breath on her lips, the glaring light of his eyes dazzling her. She had no words, no power left. She was still and limp in his arms. "Kiss me now! Kiss me your love!" he bade her, and she answered his greedy, burning lips—Josephine's facile kisses. Then suddenly he flung her away from him, and she fell back all disordered on the couch. "Ah, no, do not kiss me!" he cried. "Your kisses burn my blood."

Josephine, patting at her tumbled dress, stared at him as a child might at a madman. "You are very unreasonable," said Josephine.

"Why are you so lovely?" cried Bonaparte. "What is your strange power? Oh, you tear my heart! You intoxicate my soul!" He buried his face in her bosom. Then looked up at her, his lank hair tumbled wildly over his flushed face and fierce, steel eyes. "Ah, you are womanhood itself as I am manhood, and we surge together and meet in flame."

"You will not let me be guillotined, will you?" said Josephine.

"You!" he cried, and the bronze voice rang. "Who dares think of your death? I would save you from all the world in arms. I would keep you against heaven and hell, you, my love, that I need!"

"But Robespierre is very horrible," said Josephine. Bonaparte laughed. "Robespierre? Is it a thing of paste-board like him could touch my wife?"

"Oh, I could not possibly be that!" cried Josephine. "I am not at all like you, you know. And we should both be very unhappy because I should always be afraid."

"Afraid of love? Afraid of passion? Josephine, incomparable Josephine, I will give fire to your soul till it burns white hot in one flame with mine. Love, love, I will give you love till you are drunk with it as I."

"You are certainly very puzzling," said Josephine.

"But you, my marvellous Josephine, you are maddening—ah, yes, maddening." He clasped her waist. "Your dark eyes have the mad mystery of life."

"Our Captain Cannon appears to have chosen his side." It was Barras's humorous voice. Bonaparte started up, dishevelled and dark and swearing. "Ten thousand pardons," said Barras. "I discompose the citizeness." But Josephine did not appear discomposed. Only relieved. "Well, my Captain Cannon, you surprise me devilishly. But I am glad to find you. You are with us then?"

"I am with who pays me, citizen," quoth Bonaparte.

"Oh, but you promised you would save me!" cried Josephine.

"Be easy, my heart," said Bonaparte, over his shoulder. "You are Bonaparte's. You are safe already. Well, will you pay me, citizen?" . . . Barras made no bid. . . . "My price then—my price is to be commissioned General of the Army of Italy."

Barras gave a great laugh of relief. He had been

afraid of a demand for money. Commissions cost nothing. "Oh, for that!" says he, with a snap of his fingers, "stand by us against Robespierre and—General of the Army of Italy, I salute you!"

"Salute me in writing," said Bonaparte.

So upon Josephine's heavily scented paper Barras promised to secure Napoleon Bonaparte the Italian command. Then, "Good!" he said. "Come to me at Tallien's to-night and we will arrange for our Bilious. Now permit me two words with the citizeness."

Josephine started up with alacrity and led the way to another room. Then, Barras drew her to him and kissed her. "You have done well, my pretty," said he.

"But I don't know what I have done," said Josephine. "He wants to marry me."

"What a fool!" said Barras, and laughed and kissed her again.

"But what am I to do?" said Josephine plaintively. "He is very absurd, you know, and I am very afraid of him. But he means to marry me. I know he does. Oh, cannot you take him away?"

Barras shook his head slowly. . . . His cunning mind was considering the affair. The little Corsican was a good soldier, and might often be useful. He was infatuated with Josephine? Good! Let Josephine wed him, and in bondage to her he would be in bondage to Barras. . . . So little did the great manager of men understand Bonaparte. . . . "Well, my dear," said Barras, tapping her cheek, "marry him!"

Josephine shuddered all over. "Oh, but I thought you loved me!" she wailed.

Barras kissed her. "You are a charming toy, my dear," said he. "Mind you amuse Captain Cannon."

"I think you are very unkind," said Josephine, and began to cry. But Barras was gone.

She bathed her eyes carefully before she went back to Bonaparte. . . As soon as she was in the room he sprang at her and caught her in his arms. "Incomparable Josephine!" he cried. "Ah, you are mine!—you are mine!"

"I suppose so," said Josephine.

Bonaparte grasped her till she was breathless, kissing her again and again. "Mine, mine—mine for ever in the fierce union of love. Ah, love me well, Josephine, or my soul must die! Love me well! Sweetest, most beautiful, incomparable! Ah, be less lovely, that I may love you less! Mine, my life, soul of my soul! Rest now, rest in the arms of my love. I go to earn glory for you!"

Off he went—to Robespierre.

He persuaded that most suspicious of mortal men that he might count upon the allegiance of the army, then hurried off to arrange for his overthrow.

It was a night of intrigue. Robespierre was busy and his brother and Henriot. Tallien and Barras and their friends had no rest till dawn was near. So they panted through the hot night in Paris. Where the breath of the hay was on the air, out at Sablons, the little brigadier wrote ten lines of orders for the morrow and lay down to dream of Josephine.

On the morrow, when the Convention met, each man looked in wonder at his neighbour. They were both alive then as yet, and free. Who knew how long? A ghastly silence reigned in the hall. The air was heavy on their eyes, and unhealthy. Now Robespierre was mounting the tribune—Robespierre in the sky-blue coat

and nankeen trousers he used for to make god. Robespierre was speaking. It was the old tune—Liberty, Humanity: Humanity, Liberty: Supreme Being, Republican Virtue: Traitors to Fraternity,—the old dreary cant. And working to the old end: Traitors to Fraternity, to Sacred Fraternity, for them the tumbril, the guillotine! But now men look at each other and mutter. . . . It is true then. . . . He does want more blood then. . . . Whose now? . . . Not mine, by God!—not mine. . . .

The thin voice scrapes on: “In the name of the Divine Principles of Republican Virtue I assail them, I accuse them, I——”

Tallien is up. “You!—you!” Tallien is shouting. “You, the tyrant!” And at the word whole ranks roar out their fears. “Citizens!” Tallien cries, “if the Convention dare not strike the Tyrant, then I dare—I!” and he plucks out a dagger and makes it flash in the sunlight—his wife’s dagger, they say. At the gleam of steel break forth mad shouts: “Tyranny!—tyranny! Down with the Tyrant! Death!—death!” and Robespierre’s friends try to roar them down and fail, and Robespierre struggles with words, and President Thuriot clangs his bell, and all is chaos till there is froth upon his pale lips, and his voice cracks and fails. And when they are all mad with their own din, “Accusation!” Tallien roars. “Decree of accusation!” and swiftly the decree is passed, and Robespierre accused—Robespierre and his brother and Couthon the cripple and St. Just and Le Bas. They are condemned, they are packed away. With wondering relief the members go off home. It has been so easy after all.

Arm in arm, drunk with success, Tallien and Barras

came to Tallien's house, and there they gave Bonaparte boisterous greeting, and drank deep and roared at him the stupid jokes of victory. . . . In the midst of their mirth the bells clang from every steeple, and they hear the roll of drums. Tallien is away in a frenzy to find out what it means, and Barras rushes after him, then turns back and fires nervous questions at Bonaparte.

"*Enfin*," says Bonaparte with a shrug, and says no more.

Tallien comes back, and breathless, frantic, blurts out his tale. The turnkeys, Robespierre's creatures, would not take Robespierre into prison. And Robespierre is free, and sits at the Town Hall devising massacre, and Henriot has brought all the gendarmes to help him, and the Town Hall is fortified, and the mob of Paris is packed about it yelling for the blood of Robespierre's foes. What to do now?—what to do?

Bonaparte beckons to his adjutant, one Murat, and Murat is gone riding as only Murat can ride, thundering through that turbulent summer eve.

Barras had an inspiration then. Barras would call the Convention together again. A great deed! Bonaparte shrugged his shoulders and stretched himself out in Tallien's easy-chair and went to sleep.

But indeed the Convention had called itself together. At the sound of those alarm bells, at the tidings of Robespierre's mob, the good souls ran in panic to their hall. Like sheep they felt safer together. Like sheep they crowded together against danger. In a moment they voted Robespierre and his men outlaws, they sent missionaries into the streets to preach the crowds to their side, they named Barras general. And Barras, that great general, ran off to Bonaparte and shook

him out of sleep: "One may act now, Captain Cannon!" he cried. "The Convention has declared him outlaw."

Bonaparte yawned at him, then stretched himself, and lounged to the window and put out his head. Still the bells were pealing, and the drums beat and the mob was roaring. The hot, heavy air was fraught with sound. Bonaparte shrugged again. "I also shall have to make a noise, citizens," said he, and he smiled at the night. . . . Now horsemen came clattering up the street, a half troop of cavalry. Bonaparte ran out and sprang to the saddle of his white charger and rode off in the midst.

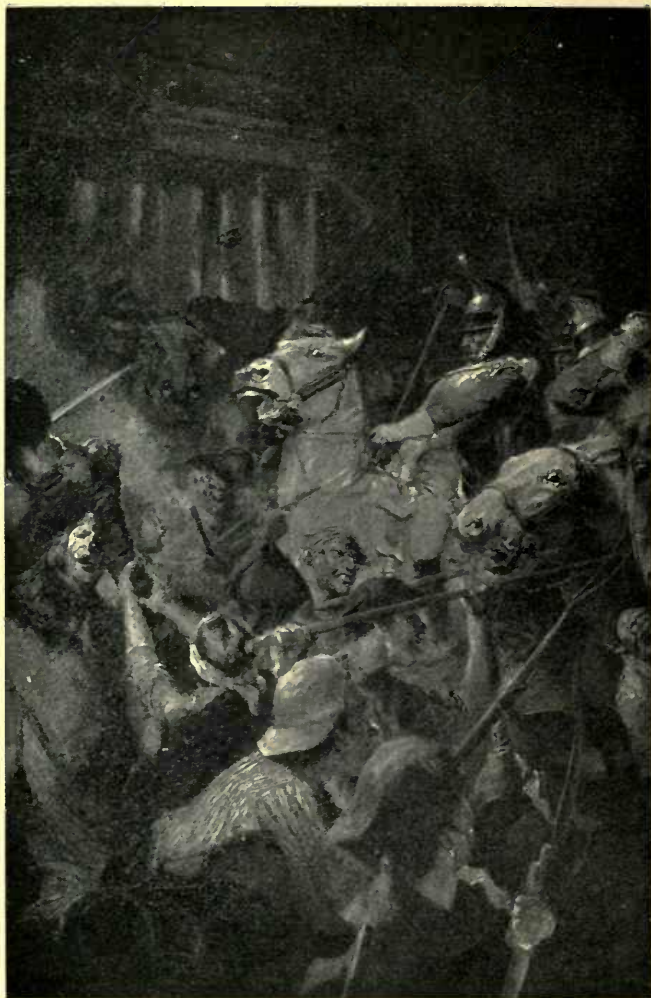
In the Place de Grève before the Town Hall was packed all the scoundrelism of Paris, all the fanatics of Fraternity, all the madmen who loved and throve on the blood-streams of the Terror, all who made it help them to blackmail and rapine and lust—all were thronged there with Henriot's rascally gendarmes, a huge crowd armed with plentiful strange weapons ugly to see.

Their yells went up to the star-spangled black sky. At a window of the Town Hall, between torches, stood Robespierre, livid in the smoky light. He had a speech to make, of course. The thin, dull stream of cant poured out once more. Liberty, Humanity: Humanity, Liberty: Supreme Being: Sacred Fraternity. . . . Through his thin voice came the clatter of steel.

Horsemen were moving along the quay. A line of cuirasses glinted pale in the gloom. "The army!—the army!" men roared, and the crowd swayed to and fro. "Be at ease!" Robespierre screamed. "They are our friends—our brothers. They come to join us. Salute,







The Crowd Withstood and Struck Back with Clubs  
and Pikes and Knives

my brothers!—salute!” He flung out his arms to the cuirassiers. He was very grateful to Bonaparte.

But those cuirassiers took no heed of him. They defiled orderly into the Place de Grève, while the crowd gave them room and welcome. The cuirassiers were silent. Bonaparte’s brazen voice spoke: “Citizens, to your homes! Robespierre is outlaw! To your homes, citizens!” Then Robespierre screamed wild words from his window and fell into a frenzy.

The cuirassiers spurred their horses against the amazed crowd and struck with the flat of the sword, roaring, “Give room!—give room! To your homes!” But once the first shock was spent the crowd withstood and struck back with clubs and pikes and knives, and pistols flashed, and the cuirassiers were in evil case. . . .

At the corner by the quay Bonaparte sat his white horse, and his eyes were steady on the fight. . . . Robespierre gibbered and raved from on high. . . .

Now the crowd had the upper hand, now the cuirassiers were beaten back. . . . Along the quay came at the double two companies of grenadiers, along the quay the jingle and clank and rumble of guns. Masked by the grenadiers, three guns unlimbered and trained upon the crowd.

Bonaparte looked at them once over his shoulder, and said a word to the trumpeter at his side. The trumpet sounded. The cuirassiers broke out of the crowd, and as it surged after them, yelling, the grenadiers fell away from before the guns and the night was rent in yellow flame.

Grapeshot blasted wide roads of death through the heart of the crowd, and before there was time to flee

the guns swung a little, and flashed and roared again, and slew. It was enough. Shrieking in mad panic, the crowd of scoundrels turned and fought each other in their haste to be gone. The cuirassiers swept the square as a wave sweeps a castle of sand away. . . .

Over wounded and slain the grenadiers marched to the Town Hall and broke in to seize Robespierre. They found him—found him with a ghastly wound in the jaw. He had tried to kill himself, and missed his aim. They bound up the wound roughly to save him alive for the guillotine. They dragged him out in his agony. By the lantern light in the doorway he saw Bonaparte. He jerked his guards back, and stood glaring into Bonaparte's brow. His mangled face worked horribly. . . . God knows what wild hate gripped him. . . . But he was ended. Fanatic of forms and theories, he had met the stark force of reality. . . . Bonaparte considered him with grave, merciless eyes. He babbled a little like a babe. Then they hurled him on and packed him on a tumbril. In the sky-blue coat he had worn to make god he was borne tortured to death. The summer dawn was breaking as he went.

The Reign of Terror was done. General of things as they are, Bonaparte had driven the fanatics down to death. His guns blasted the abstractions away, and the worship of them and the slaughter for their sake. He had conquered, general of human force and human love.

He was away to the Rue Chantereine—away with his glory to Josephine. He had her in his arms, beautiful and tremulous, his eyes blazed into hers: "Love, my queen, my goddess, soul of my soul, give me my

prize! Always—always the conqueror while you love me. The first of an eternity of victories! Ah, I bind my laurels about your white brow. I pour my glories into your sweet bosom. Give me love, my Josephine, only love. For you I conquered. For you I will conquer ever. Heart of my soul, it was for you I fought. For you the victory and its glory and fruit. That is the purpose of my life—to glorify you—to exalt you among women—to bring you honour and power and joy. My sweet, my incomparable, I am the messenger of gladness to you. In your joy only can I know joy. Give me love then! . . . Ah, soul of my soul, let the fragrant lips speak! Tell me!—tell me!”

“Oh, I suppose so,” said Josephine.

He crushed her on his heart. He crushed her lips beneath his.

Josephine was a little pleased.

\* \* \* \* \*

A bride of a month, Josephine walked in her garden at Malmaison. It was near the end of Fructidor, and the roses were flowering again. She plucked a white one and gave it to Barras. Barras with a white rose! But Josephine had no humour. Barras took his rose and kissed each one of her fingers. Josephine laughed. “But you are a naughty citizen,” said Josephine. “You forget that I am a wife.”

“Why should I remember it?” laughed Barras.

“It is certainly not amusing,” said Josephine, with a little grimace. “He wants so much, my Captain Cannon. Always transports, always ecstasy. You do not know how boring ecstasy is. Happily he loves his fighting. If he did nothing but love me I should be

mad. But he is often with that good Carnot, or by himself planning his campaign in Italy. Poor Italy! If it finds him as oppressive as I—oh! My soul is one with his in the flame of the force of life. He talks to me like that at breakfast. Ouf! Decidedly he is a failure, monsieur my husband.”

Barras brushed her chin with a full-blown rose so that the petals fell down over her bosom. “Decidedly, madame his wife is a pleasing toy,” said he.

“Heigho!” Josephine sighed lightly. “But a wife is a broken toy.”

“I’ll prove you you are not,” said Barras, and slipped his arm round her and tilted her chin upward, kissed her cheeks and her mouth.

She let him, and then slipped gracefully away; and then with that foolish, light laugh of hers, “But indeed you are a naughty citizen,” said she gaily; . . . then the mirth froze upon her whitening face, and her mouth opened and shut. “Look!” she muttered. Barras turned to see Bonaparte.

Bonaparte stood still, his big, lean face livid, the muscles stark and quivering, the heavy brow drawn down over eyes that flashed like lances of flame. Barras changed colour, and began to stammer something. “Go!” cried Bonaparte, and his voice rang back from the house wall. . . . Barras hesitated with blundering feet—plunged away.

Bonaparte strode to Josephine and gripped her wrists, and the grey fire of his eyes came close to hers. She trembled and shuddered, and turned her face away and began to cry. “God! how I loved you!” he groaned, . . . and let her go.

“I—I think you are very unkind,” Josephine sobbed.

Bonaparte stared away through the mellow sunlight.

Josephine cried a little more. Then timidly she came close to him and laid her wet cheek on his shoulder: "Napoléon, dear," she said softly, "indeed I do not love him one bit——"

Bonaparte started from her and faced her, dark with passion. "It is that condemns you!" he cried. "If you did love him—God, I might honour you still!" He caught her arms again. "What are you? What is the use of you? He or I—it is the same. You give any man all you have, and that is nothing. Caress—play—for you there is no more in life. You are not a woman. You have no power to love."

"Oh, but I am your wife," Josephine wailed.

Bonaparte broke into peals of mad laughter. She stared at him wondering, then hurried fearful away.

Bonaparte stood alone . . . alone as the sun fell to the west through a blood-red sky . . . alone, a grim, dark statue against the stained light. . . . "*Tête d'armée*," he muttered at last, "*tête d'armée*," and with a groan went in through the shadows.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW HE SAW HIS STAR

THEY called it the Army of Scarecrows in Nice. Officially it was the Army of Italy, the Army of Soldiers of Glory. The Army of Italy was sorry for itself. It had no money, and only a few trousers. The wholesome half of its food was begged or stolen. One man out of three was in the tattered hospital tents. The rest shivered under the mistral and the winter sky.

There was, you see, a necessity that M. Barras and his comrades of the Directory in Paris should have purple and fine linen for their women and sufficient '79 champagne to wet the quails with truffles.

It is not to be supposed that the Army of Italy had any intention of fighting for M. Barras. The Army of Italy (which had not yet contrived to get into Italy) was firm in its purpose not to fight at all. They were no cowards, those ragged skeletons, but they had had enough of war. In the first fine frenzy of the Revolution they had sprung to arms to drive the Austrian from the soil of France. After four years' work the Austrian was gone, and the scarecrows of the Army of Italy did not want to go after him. They wanted four years' pay. That was the only reason why they did not disband themselves and seek each his own homestead. There was no general to keep them back. Poor M. Scherer—it would be sarcastic to call him general—had given them up in despair. He made them a speech



of farewell. It was impossible, he cried, to do anything with such an army as they were. They cheered lustily. A sense of humour was all they had left.

You see them, a wretched mass of humanity, on the hills above Nice. They are huddled together in shelter-holes dug to hold a company packed close. Here and there rises the thin smoke of a fire, but nearly all the trees have been cut down, and wood is as scarce as meat. Shaggy, ragged skeletons all, they are gay enough. You can watch them playing knuckle-bones with an onion or a handful of lentils at stake, and hear them singing songs which even in French one may not quote concerning their officers. It is not easy to be an officer of the Army of Italy. No one, indeed, sings songs of Augereau while that large man is by. His regiment does not jest much with the square-faced Colonel Moncade. But most of them—colonels, brigadiers, and all—do no more than smile sourly at the scandalous, mutinous doggerel. Colonel Niort there even joins in it. He likes to be popular, that lean, handsome Colonel Niort.

It was a grey day of February, and the sea stretched dull, steel-blue to a near horizon. Along the coast road from Oneglia came a tiny caravan of mules, and they turned and climbed the hills to the Army of Italy. A man and a woman rode side by side, both too dark to be of Europe, something too fair to be of East or South. In the man's gaunt face pale yellow eyes fidgeted. He had a beard that was twisted into tiny close-packed curls. He wore a square cap of black fur, and a flowing black robe that was edged with ermine. The woman's face was round and gay, and crimson lips and black eyes laughed in it together. She was all

golden-brown fur and crimson velvet. Behind them a grinning black boy rode, and led a basket-laden mule. The man and the woman dismounted lightly and left their mules with the black boy and lightly came forward to the nearest shelter-hole. It was there that Colonel Niort was singing choruses with his regiment. Hard by Colonel Moncade scowled at him and them.

“O happy sons of men!” cried the man, “it is yours to behold Suleyman—Suleyman, reincarnate by no mortal sire and dam, Suleyman born of space and time.” While he spoke he made passes in the air, and from the empty air his empty hands were filled with jewels and glittering daggers. These he waved in the air, and they were gone again and his hands empty. “Out of the void came all things. Into the void all things pass again. Only the soul endures.” Up into the air he flung a rope, and it stayed stiff and straight as a tower. “So stands the soul lord of all.” He beckoned to the rope and it bowed and fell slowly to his feet. “So souls obey me who have in me all the wisdom of time.”

“But there is never a soul has a *sou* for you,” cried one of the wits of Colonel Niort’s regiment.

Suleyman laughed. “Lord of the powers of the earth and sky, what need I of your money? I live upon air and fire. World powers toil at my will. See life born at my call. Balkis!”

The woman came forward smiling and began to dance. Through a whirl of crimson robe the soldiers saw a delectable form of womanhood outlined in creamy white. They rose at her, howling in glee. Behind her Suleyman was making gestures at the grey sky. Into

his empty hands came a bowl of earth. He set it down. He clapped his hands, and they were full of wheat. He planted the grains carefully. He spoke one word and Balkis stopped her dance. He bent over the bowl and chanted. She came and danced anew round it and him. Plain to see, green ears broke through the earth, and rose, and rose. Balkis whirled about them, lovely in a maze of crimson and white. Suleyman cried aloud and clapped his hands. Balkis stopped. The ears stood golden ripe.

Suleyman went forward with them to Colonel Niort. "A little harvest for M. le Colonel. I see that he is eager for another."

The lean, handsome face flushed. "It is always safe to mean nothing, master wizard," said Colonel Niort.

"That is what one does in love-making, eh, Monsieur le Colonel?" said Suleyman, and his yellow eyes set themselves at Colonel Niort's. "Shall I tell you what she thinks of you?"

"Perhaps I know, master wizard," said Colonel Niort, with a smile.

"You are not modest. Perhaps you do. She thinks you are almost irresistible.

Colonel Niort laughed. "If I had anything I would give you something," said he.

"I will call for it after the wedding," said Suleyman, and turned away; in doing which he beheld the scowling disapproval of Colonel Moncade. "Holà! Another Monsieur le Colonel, who makes love with a sigh and a groan. Well! there is some woman to like each man's way. Shall I tell you what she thinks of you?"

Colonel Moncade took a step towards him, swearing.

Suleyman met him calmly. "Away with you, hound!" cried Colonel Moncade.

"She wishes you were irresistible," said Suleyman calmly.

Colonel Moncade, swearing again, raised his hand to strike. Suleyman caught it in a grip that much surprised the honest colonel, who stamped his foot and cried for his orderly. "Name of a dog! Scourge me this hound——"

Colonel Niort's regiment came running up like little boys to a fight. "Fairly, softly!" cried one and another. "He amuses us. We'll keep him to play with. Scourge your own men, Moncade;" and they parted the wrathful struggling colonel from Suleyman, who smiled amiably upon him. Moncade's regiment came to its colonel's aid, and Niort's men plunged at them with yells of joy. Moncade, swearing volubly at his own men and striking generously, was getting them in hand, was drawing them away. But Niort stood laughing on the edge of the fight, and mocked at his men and cheered them on. Suleyman had slid out of it and away to his mules and watched with calm interest. And chaos grew, and officers and soldiers fought together like beasts, and there was amazing turmoil in the Army of Italy.

A man on a white horse came over the shoulder of the hill. There was not much of him, muffled close in that grey overcoat. He rode clumsily. But the wintry light fell across a face of gaunt strength—a bronze face, combatant, hungry. From beneath the great dome of brow came a trenchant grey gleam of steel. There were half a dozen horsemen with him, but he rode before them alone.

In one keen flash of his grey eyes he saw the tumult, and Colonel Niort amusing himself with it. He pointed with his whip at Colonel Niort: "Is that thing an officer?" he cried, and his voice rang clear through the din.

Colonel Niort started like an animal under the whip, and strode forward. The pushing, fighting regiments stayed to look.

Bonaparte rode straight at Colonel Niort, spurring his horse, and, not to be trodden down, Colonel Niort must needs draw aside. Full into the press of those regiments Bonaparte rode, and now his voice rang gaily: "What, my children! Would you eat each other? Then you'll all have an indigestion, I swear. Come then! Heaven for all, and to hell with the enemy!" The quarrelling regiments stood apart to gape and grin at this strange little man with the eyes that stabbed. He rode through the midst, saluting them.

Then Suleyman cried aloud: "Homage of worlds to the world-conqueror."

Bonaparte turned in his saddle swiftly. "Who said that?" he cried, and saw Suleyman salaam and salaam again. One moment Bonaparte lingered staring at him. Then he turned and rode on to the hut where Augereau lived. He left Colonel Niort and Colonel Moncade and their regiments much surprised at him and themselves and each other.

Suleyman mounted his mule and went off with his wife and his black boy and his baggage to Nice. As they rode down the hill, "I think," said Suleyman, "I think he is all that we thought him. What, Balkis?"

Balkis was not now laughing. "He is more," she said.

"I foresaw profit in him," said Suleyman.

"He makes me sad. Like a storm," said Balkis.

Meanwhile the whisper began to run through the regiments that the little man in the grey overcoat was their new general. There was laughter in the Army of Italy. They had always found their generals good sport. The colonels went leisurely off to see what the little man was like. Save Colonel Niort. He had an urgent affair in Nice.

She was a girl to whom womanhood had come soon, a girl deep-bosomed and strong, with full, lazy lips and great, dark, dull eyes. They brightened a little to receive Colonel Niort. Colonel Niort's manner indicated that he was aware of it. She was entirely at her ease on that gold brocaded couch in her father's splendid salon, and she shifted her primrose skirts graciously to make a place for Colonel Niort at her side. Then she considered him gravely. So gravely that Colonel Niort smiled, and "I hope I find favour with mademoiselle?" said he.

"I do not know. That is what troubles me," said Mademoiselle Royou.

"That permits me to hope at least," said Colonel Niort.

Mademoiselle Royou still considered him gravely. "I wonder what I hope," she said.

"Ah, mademoiselle, you have not to hope," said Colonel Niort with a sigh. "You are sure of love, and because you are sure of love you are sure of happiness."

"One wants to love as well as be loved," said Mad-

emoiselle Royou, "and I . . . do not know. . . ." She turned from Colonel Niort, but was still wholly calm.

Colonel Niort's eyes rested on the gentle surge of her bosom. "Doubt never made happiness," he said softly.

Again she gave her grave eyes to his. "You are cleverer than I am," she said.

From Colonel Niort came a sad little laugh. "What is all I am beside you?" he said, and he sighed.

"You make me feel a child," said the girl.

"I would have you be a child always," cried Colonel Niort.

It was the wrong note—for the ears of Mademoiselle Royou. She drew herself up. "No. I am not like that," she said, half to herself, and rose and walked away to the glass alcove, where palms and myrtles stood glossy green.

Colonel Niort followed her. Her round arms of ivory were bare from above the dimples at the elbow. He put his hand about one, and she started and faced him, flushing faintly, with wonder in her eyes. "Ninon," he said hoarsely, "ah, Ninon, you make my soul throb for you."

She was looking into his eyes. Easily, lightly, still her bosom rose and fell. "I do not know," she said slowly.

"Not know?" cried Colonel Niort; his handsome face was dark with passion. "How can I tell you? How can I show you?"

He drew her to him. She did not resist. Still she looked steadily into his eyes. "I do not know about myself," she said.

And now there were two other people in the salon.

Her father, M. Royou, the banker, swarthy and stout, had come with that square-faced Colonel Moncade. Her father saw her with Colonel Niort, and grunted profusely. "That is where you would be, Moncade, if you were not—what you are," said he, and grunting still came up to the pair.

Colonel Niort was very affable, and M. Royou was very gruff to every one, and Mademoiselle Royou was herself, and Colonel Moncade was nothing at all till the two soldiers made up their minds to go. Then Mademoiselle Royou looked at her father fairly in that grave, frank way of hers. "You are not pleased with me, sir?" she asked.

"I am not a fool," her father grunted.

"Some things are . . . difficult," said Mademoiselle Royou.

Away on the hills General Bonaparte had held his first levee. It was in Augereau's hut, where one pile of dried turves made the chair and another the table. They told Augereau that a new general had come and lodged himself there, and Augereau—that magnificent animal—came and looked the little man up and down with contempt. Bonaparte saluted him with a smile. "I am proud to serve with the best swordsman in France," said he.

"Humph! Of course you have heard of me," quoth Augereau, and the curl of his lip added that no one had heard of Bonaparte.

Bonaparte's eyes opened a little wider. For a moment of silence the steel light clove at Augereau—who stepped back a pace. "All the world will hear of me, and of those who fight with me," said Bonaparte quietly.



Augereau stared. Augereau fidgeted; seemed to want to get away and lack the power. At last, "This is a devil of an army, you know. . . . But it is something to have a general," said he.

"Serve me as I serve you and we shall do enough," said Bonaparte.

Masséna, of the dark Jewish face, came limping in. "There is a new general, I hear," he said gruffly. "Ah, it is you. Where have you served? In a drawing-room?"

"In a school where I learned to obey, Masséna." The voice rang, and the brow lowered down as the keen eyes stabbed. Must I teach you?"

Masséna shuffled across to Augereau's side. "Teach the army and you may teach me," he grumbled.

Bonaparte laughed. "I will teach you to advance," he said.

The two looked at him and each other. "Have you seen this damned army?" quoth Masséna.

"I will see it to-morrow. The army will parade at dawn."

Masséna whistled. Augereau shrugged his shoulders. "This damned army," Masséna grumbled, "does what it likes and it likes to do nothing."

Bonaparte smiled: he said nothing at all: only he looked steadily at Masséna and smiled, till the grim mirth of those grey eyes infected Masséna, and he gave a hoarse chuckle. . . .

Brigadiers and colonels made their way to the little hut and inspected their new general, some with jeering politeness, some with rough scorn. And for all Bonaparte was ready. The fierce combatant strength of him beat them down: he was their comrade still. They went out from the hut a little dazed. And strange

tales of the new general began to run through the army.

When they were all gone Bonaparte called about him the little company of friends that he had brought from Paris. "Murat, my friend, and Junot, you can talk. Go and talk about me. Berthier, you will be my adjutant-general. Learn all there is to be learnt of this mad army." Berthier stared hard and bit his nails, as his way was. Without answering he sauntered out.

"And you?" said Marmont.

"I am going to be myself," said Bonaparte. With Marmont and his guard, Jean Dortan, following close, he strode away. While the darkness gathered he made himself good comrade with regiment after regiment, and at last, coming to the shelter-holes of Moncade's men, "Have you room for one more, comrades?" said he.

"Generals sleep in generals' quarters," some one growled from the gloom.

"This general fares as his comrades fare. Come, my children, give room. There is not much of me but my head."

The end of it all was that when the bugles sounded for parade at dawn there was a muster of scarecrows that amazed Masséna. A great part of the army had deigned to obey. Many a regiment had lean ranks, but there was some part there of every regiment save one—Colonel Niort's. Neither Colonel Niort nor any of his men had found it necessary to come. In each regiment the roll was called and the absent marked. Berthier brought the parade state to Bonaparte . . . and Bonaparte, after a moment, looked up to ask: "Colonel Niort was informed of the order?" Berthier saluted. "I am sorry for Colonel Niort—and his regiment," said Bonaparte quietly.

Then he rode his white charger to the middle of the line: "Soldiers!" the bronze voice rang, "you want everything. I come to show you the way to win it. We commence a campaign for France, for freedom, for ourselves. All shall be enriched before the year's end. Soldiers! Follow me to glory and wealth. I shall not fail you. Do not fail me." There was a vast many-throated cheer. Bonaparte touched his hat. Then he turned to Masséna. "Give them some manœuvres," said he.

So Masséna played tactics with the Army of Italy on the level ground by the shore, and on the hills above Colonel Niort and his regiment and other malingerers jeered. But for the first time in its life the Army of Italy had a heart in it, and there was a smile on Bonaparte's lips as he rode off to Nice.

He sought the banker, M. Royou. You see the two sitting against each other: Royou, placid and stout, with little dark eyes, and Bonaparte lean, fierce, eager. "I want money, M. Royou," quoth Bonaparte.

M. Royou blinked at him. "So do I," said M. Royou.

"Bah, you have millions."

"That is why I want more," said M. Royou.

"I will help you to them. Lend to me."

M. Royou blinked at him again. "I never give," said M. Royou.

Bonaparte opened his coat and sat more easily. "Frankly, M. Royou, I have never paid any one yet. But no one will ever regret having done a kindness to Bonaparte."

M. Royou grunted. "How much kindness do you want?"

“Two hundred and fifty thousand francs.”

M. Royou leant back in his chair—it was a slow process—and shut his eyes. “I never knew the man worth that,” he announced.

Bonaparte laughed. “Then you know very little of me, M. Royou.”

M. Royou opened his eyes suddenly: “My dear friend,” he said, “I have known all about you for three minutes. Now, to whom should I lend? To you or the French Republic?”

“You will lend to the French Republic. But I will see you paid.”

M. Royou grunted. “I should wish,” he said, looking at his fat hands, “to be the agent for all moneys passing between Italy and France. At five per cent.”

“Agreed,” cried Bonaparte.

Monsieur Royou grunted. “I should wish,” he said, “that your Colonel Niort could be—removed.”

Bonaparte laughed. “To another world, M. Royou?”

Monsieur Royou looked benevolent. “That is absolutely indifferent,” said he.

“My dear M. Royou,” said Bonaparte with enthusiasm, “we were made for each other.”

“It will be at eight per cent.,” said M. Royou.

And in fine they settled it so that two hundred and fifty thousand francs were to be sent to Bonaparte before night on the next day, and M. Royou, finding Colonel Niort at lunch with his daughter, was to that warrior amazingly amiable.

When the money came into camp, Bonaparte ordained an advance of ten francs to each man of those who had come on parade at his first order. Then there was jubilation, as among men who had long been starv-

ing for money, and the malingerers cursed Bonaparte and all heaven and themselves, and Colonel Niort, who had advised his good men not to break their sleep for a monkey general, was less popular. That night secret orders came to Colonel Moncade. At réveillé next morning Colonel Niort's regiment found themselves surrounded by Colonel Moncade's, and Moncade's men had their muskets loaded. Colonel Niort and his officers were arrested, his men disarmed. Like a drove of foolish sheep they stood beneath the threat of the muskets.

Bonaparte rode up with Masséna and Berthier, and glowered at the mutineers. "You are soldiers no more," he cried. "I disgrace you. I disband you. France owes you nothing but shame. Go!" Murat, coming with a squadron of horsemen, drove the dazed wretches away down the hill. Bonaparte wheeled upon Colonel Niort: "You, sir, mutineer-commandant of mutineers, you have wronged France enough. There is one day more for you on earth. At dawn to-morrow you will be shot." Niort stammered in wild haste to speak. "Silence!" Bonaparte thundered, "Silence!" and Colonel Niort stood licking his lips and trembling. "Colonel Moncade!" Moncade saluted. "He is in your custody. These others"—a coldly scornful eye turned on Niort's agitated officers—"these others are degraded to the ranks. Berthier, see to it."

Then, riding back with Masséna to inspect the artillery: "I think there will be no more mutiny in the Army of Italy," said Bonaparte with a grim smile.

Masséna was never known to agree with anything. But he did not disagree.

And through the amazed Army of Italy the tidings ran, and some one remembered a boast of Murat's, "He is a leader who leads, our little man," and the gaunt army was glad.

But Colonel Niort sat alone in the barn that Colonel Moncade had taken for a prison; sat with his chin on his hands, pallid, wide-eyed, staring into a future that was nothingness. He was very much afraid, and he was a clever man, this Colonel Niort.

After a while he went to the sergeant of the guard at the door: "I would speak with Colonel Moncade."

The sergeant took his time, but Moncade came at last. Square and stolid, he stood over Colonel Niort, who was wrapt in a gaze at the future. "You sent for me," said Colonel Moncade.

Niort looked up with a start—then sprang to his feet and clapped his hand on Moncade's shoulder. "You are a man of honour!" he cried. Moncade, who was no dramatist, shrugged a little. "I trust my love, which is more than my life, to you. Convey me a letter to Mademoiselle Royou."

Moncade drew back. There was no friendship in his eyes. He spoke with difficulty. "You have the right—to send letters—to Mademoiselle Royou?"

Colonel Niort laughed a little. "My dear friend!" he exclaimed in gentle raillery.

Moncade stared at him a moment more. Then he turned away. "I will send it," he said over his shoulder. In a little while the sergeant brought Colonel Niort all things for writing. Colonel Moncade was very thorough.

Her maid announced to Mademoiselle Royou that a soldier had brought a letter from Colonel Niort. You

see Mademoiselle Royou gaze at that letter with eyes of frank innocence and turn it over and over. She was not at all sure that she wanted it.

The inside surprised her more than the outside. It was this:

WELL-BELOVED,—I lie here under sentence of death, for no fault of my own, but the folly of my men, who must needs laugh at the orders of our new general. I die in the morning. Pray you, dear heart, let me see your face once more in life.—NIORT.

From Colonel Moncade's Prison. Pluiose 13.

I suppose she was angry with herself for not being wrought in passionate grief. She tried to be. But a quiet sorrow, a grave concern, was all she could feel. Earnestly she desired to do something for the poor man who loved her so well. She read the note over and over and admired its calm courage vastly, and grew vastly angry with the new general who was so unreasonable. And she put on her bonnet.

Suleyman and Balkis were in the lines of the Army of Italy, telling fortunes, and now that there was some money to be taken the magnificent Suleyman did not disdain to take it. He saw Mademoiselle Royou, his yellow eyes lightened, he abandoned his profession and came up behind her. "He is almost irresistible, that Captain Niort, but not quite—believe me, not quite," said he. The girl turned with a start to see Suleyman salaam. There was a stain of blood in her full cheeks as she strode on.

It was not often difficult to have an audience of Bonaparte. The daughter of M. Royou had not to ask twice. As she came into the hut Bonaparte rose

from the pile of turves and motioned her to sit. "At your orders, mademoiselle," said he.

She did not sit. She stood and studied Bonaparte with those wide, fearless eyes, and she was taller than he. That annoyed him. "I am come to beg you a kindness," she said.

"I am sure Mademoiselle Royou would beg no kindness that a maiden should not," said Bonaparte with some acidity.

"It is a life," said the girl simply.

And Bonaparte understood at once. But, "What life is so happy as to possess Mademoiselle Royou's affection?" he asked.

"It is Colonel Niort," said the girl.

"Then I cannot admire your choice, and I shall compel you to make another."

"Compel?" She drew herself up in defiant pride.

"You cannot espouse the dead, mademoiselle."

"Dead? Ah, no, he must not die! Only because his men were stupid? You cannot be so cruel. Sir, I entreat you——"

"You agitate yourself to no good, mademoiselle."

"But—but"—she clasped and unclasped her hands, and was plainly at a loss for the right way to take. Then she fell on her knees and held out her hands to Bonaparte. "I entreat you, I entreat you, spare him."

"I do my duty," said Bonaparte harshly. "Go home, girl, and do yours."

She stayed there on her knees in mute appeal. Passion was to seek in her, and she knew it better than he. "Ah, but his life—life——" she stammered. And then under Bonaparte's cold sneer her hands fell. She swayed a little, and rose to her feet.



"I shall forget all this, mademoiselle," said Bonaparte. "You will be able to forget it too."

Mademoiselle Royou went out silently.

When she was gone Bonaparte shrugged his shoulders. "That is a heart that will never break," said he. . . . A while after, as he wandered through the lines playing the good comrade skilfully, he came upon Suleyman telling fortunes, and stopped to listen. They were rather well told, and he took Suleyman by the ear: "Well, my eastern," said he, "and what will my fortune be?"

Suleyman's yellow eyes countered his boldly. "Excellence," said Suleyman, "your fortune is not to be told in a moment. But it is the ambition of my life to tell it, and am consulting the stars."

"Tell me when the stars have answered," said Bonaparte.

Suleyman salaamed. "There is one star, I think," said he in a low voice.

Bonaparte looked at him strangely.

Mademoiselle Royou, passing through the jests of the camp, had sought out Colonel Moncade. That stolid man blushed at her like a schoolboy, and made her blush in turn. "He is in your prison—Colonel Niort is?" Moncade bent his head. "Oh, must you keep him? Must it be?"

"I have orders," said Moncade gruffly.

"You could not——?" the girl stammered. "Oh, could you not——?" But it was even more difficult to beg of Captain Moncade than of Bonaparte. "I—I might see him at least?"

Colonel Moncade threw back his head like a man in

pain. "It is this way," he said gruffly, and led on to the barn.

At the sound of a woman's footstep, Colonel Niort started up. He came swiftly to meet her, holding out his hands. But Mademoiselle Royou stood still, lacing her fingers together, gazing at him with eyes that spoke wonder and something of fear.

Colonel Niort's handsome face was gravely tender. He took her hands and kissed them. "My well-beloved," he said in a deep, tremulous voice, "my heart."

"I have tried, indeed I have tried," the girl gasped. "Oh, indeed I have, but your general would not——"

Colonel Niort grasped her hands with passionate strength. "Dear one, it is like you. Ah, you must not grieve for me. I go to death with my honour clean."

Mademoiselle Royou was moved. "It is cruel, ah! it is cruel," she said, with something like a sob.

"My dearest, my dearest," Colonel Niort's voice throbbed, "you must not grieve. That—ah, I can bear all but that. I pray you, do not weep."

"No," said Mademoiselle Royou, "no." In fact she was not weeping, though her lips trembled.

Colonel Niort flung his arms about her in a sudden frenzy of passion. "God! but it is hard to leave you," he groaned, and he clasped her to his breast.

Then the woman woke, and there was wild fear in her eyes and anger, and fiercely she forced herself away, and stood panting and defiant.

"Ah, forgive me," cried Colonel Niort. "Do you wonder I am mad? This—this is my last day of life, and I have never had you in my arms. You are never for me now. Your voice, your eyes, they'll never come

to me again. 'Ah, Ninon, Ninon, I have loved you well.' There were tears in the girl's eyes now. Colonel Niort continued his subject. "My love, is it so much to ask?" he caught her hands again. "Once, once ere all's done with me to hold your heart on mine, to feel your lips—once in life."

"I—I am hard, I suppose," said the girl in a low voice. She swayed a little to him. Colonel Niort caught her, crushed her against him. His lips were hot upon hers. . . . But it was only a moment before she was struggling to free herself, before she was out of his arms and with a hand to her burning cheeks. "No, no," she panted, "it is all wrong."

"My well-beloved," said Colonel Niort very gently, "good-bye." She gave a cry of pain, of helpless remorse. She held out both her hands to him. Colonel Niort kissed them tenderly. . . . "Go now, or I must play the coward," he cried. "Go!"

Mademoiselle Royou lost no time. Her tears were blinding her. Colonel Moncade had the pleasure of seeing that.

But Colonel Niort was left smiling. 'After a while, composing his features to a decent agitation, he went to the sergeant on guard and desired to speak again with Colonel Moncade. Moncade came. Colonel Niort exhibited some emotion, and indeed Moncade was not altogether at his ease. "Moncade," said Colonel Niort hoarsely, "you know I am not a coward."

"You are not a coward," Moncade repeated.

"Good. It is easier. I am not the man to ask my life of any man. But"—Niort spoke with the difficulty of emotion—"but I have not the right—to think only—of my pride. Moncade! you saw her agony. It is

for her sake I must bend myself. I ask you—a chance to escape.”

Moncade stared away out at the sunlight. It was a long while before he spoke. . . . “She loves you?” he asked, in a low voice. Niort laughed gently. At that Moncade strode swiftly away. But behind him Colonel Niort was rubbing his hands.

After nightfall Colonel Niort observed that the guard at the door of the barn was reduced to one man. On the wicket-gate at the other end he heard the padlock squeak. A scrap of white paper fluttered through a crack: “The word is Toulon.” When all the camp was quiet Colonel Niort pushed the wicket gently open and made his way out. With the countersign ready for the challenging sentry he was swiftly beyond the lines and on his way to Nice. By M. Royou’s house he stopped. He was not the man to be ignorant which was mademoiselle’s window. A stone at it brought her to look out. She had the felicity to behold Colonel Niort, bare of head, holding out his arms to her. What could she do but come down? She opened the door and Colonel Niort sprang upon her and caught her to his breast. “Free, my beloved—free as the birds, free as the air,” he cried, and kissed her fiercely.

“I—I—I do not understand,” Mademoiselle Royou gasped.

“Let us go in. I will tell you.” Colonel Niort bolted and barred the door behind him and she led on to an inner room. She was of witching grace in her loose gown, with glossy black hair rippling about her, and Colonel Niort told her so.

“No, no. Never mind all that,” she said nervously,

and drew away from him as far as she could. "Tell me how you escaped."

"My heart, my life, I must needs live for the glory of you," cried Colonel Niort, approaching her.

A grunt was heard. Colonel Niort, turning, was in time to see the entry of M. Royou. M. Royou, like his daughter, wore a loose gown, but he had no peculiar grace in it. "This is a surprise," said M. Royou genially. "I thought you were going to die. Has some one made a mistake?"

"Sir," cried Colonel Niort, "I had to win life for your daughter's sake."

"You are very obliging," said M. Royou. "How did you contrive it?"

"I have broken prison. I am free!" cried Colonel Niort. "Free for my Ninon and her love."

"Oh! Oh, no!" Ninon gasped.

"My dear colonel," said her father, "you interest me extremely. Tell me what you did."

"Sir, I am not the man to ask a kindness of any man for my own sake. But love is lord. Ah"—he kissed his hand to Mademoiselle Royou—"love is lord. I humbled myself. I told my good friend Colonel Moncade. He saw my necessities. He left me a door open. I am here free with my life and my love."

M. Royou grunted. "I am wondering," he announced, "what your General Bonaparte will do to Moncade."

Colonel Niort was approaching Mademoiselle Royou. "That is plainly Moncade's affair," said he, over his shoulder.

M. Royou approached the bell. "Now I think it is mine," said he.

Colonel Niort turned with a start. "What?" he cried, and his handsome face grew dark.

M. Royou rang the bell. "It is natural," he said, "that you would like to have Moncade shot for you. But I would rather have you shot for Moncade."

"Why then?" Colonel Niort thundered.

"Because," said M. Royou calmly, "Moncade loves my daughter, and you do not."

Mademoiselle Royou gave a little startled cry.

"Loves her?" cried Niort. "He set me free to love her."

"Yes," said M. Royou, and rang the bell again. Colonel Niort was breaking into the eloquence of passion when a sleepy, dishevelled footman came in. "See that this gentleman does not leave the room, Joseph," said M. Royou, and rang the bell a third time. With an oath Colonel Niort darted at the door. The footman made a feeble clutch at him and was thrown down. Then M. Royou himself, for all his years and his fat, closed with Niort, shouting lustily for his household. Niort flung him heavily down, and he fell with a leg twisted beneath him, and his head struck the marble floor. Then with a cry his daughter flung herself down beside him. Colonel Niort stared a moment, gave out a curse, and fled.

In the morning, an hour after dawn, Colonel Moncade was wakened by his adjutant, who announced with alarm that Colonel Niort had escaped. Colonel Moncade (he was in no way an actor) showed little surprise. At the suggestion of the adjutant he went to question the sentry of the night (from whom he learnt nothing), and inspect the empty barn (in which he

found nothing). His adjutant looked at Colonel Moncade. Colonel Moncade looked at his adjutant. "The general will have to be informed," said the adjutant.

"I am going," said Colonel Moncade, and went.

Bonaparte sat at his breakfast—a chicken cooked with onions—and looked up with his mouth full. "Moncade? Good. You have shot him?"

"No, sir."

Bonaparte leant back from his plate. "And why the devil not, Colonel Moncade?"

"He has escaped, sir."

Bonaparte started up. "Do you mock me?" he thundered. "Am I never to be obeyed? Take care, Colonel Moncade. He was in your charge, and you pay for his life with your own."

"I know it, sir," said Colonel Moncade.

"Well then—well, how did he escape?"

"I went to speak to him last night. I suppose that I left the door of his prison unlocked."

Bonaparte exploded an oath. "Suppose!—Suppose! Rascal, you suppose you meant to set him free!"

Colonel Moncade did not deny it. He looked Bonaparte fairly in the eye.

"What! Am I to be defied?" Bonaparte thundered, swarthy in rage. He stamped his foot on the ground, shouting: "Berthier!—Berthier!" and Berthier came in a hurry, wiping his mouth. "You will arrest that officer, Berthier. You will order a general parade of the army an hour before sunset. That officer will be degraded and drummed out of the army. He will then be shot. Arrange it." Berthier saluted and held out his hand for Moncade's sword. Moncade drew it and gave it up. But his eyes still sought Bonaparte's.

“Colonel Moncade,” said Bonaparte, “it was not worth while.”

Colonel Moncade saluted, and went out with Berthier’s hand on his shoulder.

The best surgeons of Nice bled M. Royou zealously, and it may be, as they assured him, that their treatment saved his life. It certainly brought him near death. He lay that morning with his daughter watching over him, helpless. As the sun rose higher he began to murmur to himself, and she caught the word “Moncade—Moncade,” and felt her heart check and throb. . . . Colonel Moncade . . . she saw the square, honest face . . . was it true that he loved her, he in his lonely strength? Then—then he must love her most nobly. At least—again her father murmured “Moncade, Moncade,” and painfully his eyes sought hers.

“Dear,” she knelt by the bedside, “what is it, then?”

For answer she had only: “Moncade, Moncade.”

There was but one thing to do. Again, something shamefully, she made her way to that camp on the hills, to Colonel Moncade’s regiment. It was not in a good temper. It is probable that Moncade’s men never much loved Colonel Moncade—he was not a man easy to love—but they were not pleased that he should be shot for the sake of Colonel Niort. They said so with the coarsest freedom to Mademoiselle Royou. And the girl, her mind tingling with shame and grief, fled from them, and slowly, difficultly, forced herself on to Bonaparte.

Suleyman was approaching the hut in front of her, but he heard her coming, and, salaaming, made way.



"The Mademoiselle Royou desires an audience of General Bonaparte," he announced to an orderly.

There was again no delay for Mademoiselle Royou. Bonaparte received her shamed face with fierce eyes. "What, mademoiselle! Have you come to tell me how you made a good soldier traitor to get your paramour out of danger?"

"No! No!" Mademoiselle Royou cried. "Oh, I never cared for him, truly, truly I never cared for him. But this is terrible. Colonel Moncade is true and honourable and noble. Indeed, indeed he is. Oh, I think he is the noblest man in all the world. It is the other—the other——" she shuddered. "Oh, you must not kill Colonel Moncade. Indeed you must not."

"You should have thought of this yesterday," said Bonaparte coldly.

"I did not know." She brushed back her hair with a strange, nervous gesture. "It is so hard to know. Oh, sir, I pray you—see—see!" she flung herself down and clung to him, looking up with wild, tearful eyes. "Oh, I will be your slave if you will spare him. This—this is shame that kills—that he should die because he loved me so well—and he is so good and true and great—ah, sir, I——"

Bonaparte thrust her away. "Strumpet, am I to pardon all your gulls? I would have you whipped before the army but for your father's sake."

Still she clung to him, still she stammered some wild, pitiful prayer. Bonaparte called an orderly and had her thrust out.

Racked with the wild sobbing of shame she went blindly away. . . . She felt a hand on her arm, and through her tears saw Suleyman's weird form. "For

this one it is well you should cry," said Suleyman. "Consider: would you give much for his life?"

"Give?" She stared at him distraught. "I would give all I have—life—all."

"Would you give ten thousand francs?" said Suleyman softly, with crafty eyes.

"I will give anything—my father will—anything."

"Do not shout," said Suleyman, and slid stealthily away from her.

A while after he was chatting amiably with Berthier's cook, and unostentatiously slipped three pellets into the bowl of soup prepared for Colonel Moncade.

Then he bade a gentlemanly farewell to the cook, and took himself to Bonaparte's hut, and slid past the sentry and in without a sound. "The Powers of the Air salute the Power of the Earth," said he in a hollow voice. "My lord, the stars have answered."

Bonaparte looked up from a map of Lombardy. "What the devil——! Oh, it is the wizard. Well, sirrah, and what say the stars?"

"I will tell you," said Suleyman impressively, "in my own place. There, by the might of all the wisdom of time, I will make you see your destiny."

"Perhaps I see it myself."

"Do you see an empire?" said Suleyman. "Do you see its heir?"

"What?" cried Bonaparte, flushing.

"Come and see," said Suleyman.

"It must be now or never, master wizard."

"My lord," said Suleyman, with a magnificent gesture, "come now. I will make you see your destiny, and for reward I ask only to follow it and a dead man's body."

“A dead man?” cried Bonaparte. “Do you think I keep dead men about me?”

“You could kill one, I suppose,” said Suleyman carelessly. “Ay, you are going to kill one to-night. Give me his body.”

“Colonel Moncade?”

“His name does not matter.”

“What the devil is his body to you?”

“I need it in my experiments,” said Suleyman. “The husk of man has its use when the kernel that is the seed of life has gone. There is value in death to the adept, my lord. Give me his body.”

Bonaparte shrugged. “Well. It may be some use to you. It has been none to me. And not much to himself.” He rose, calling for Jean Dortan and his horse.

“It is agreed, my lord,” Suleyman reminded him, “that henceforth I follow your destiny.”

“I will see my destiny first,” said Bonaparte.

So with the good Jean Dortan grumbling a little at all mountebanks, the three of them rode off to Nice. Suleyman had made his quarters in a decent house in the Rue St. François. His black boy let them in and they came to a big room bare of all ornament, hung with scarlet. It was lit with candles. A great ball of crystal hung in mid-air, two more stood upon the table. A glass lamp burnt with the invisible flame of spirit of wine. Balkis lay at easy length on cushions, clad in a white gown that revealed the rich grace of her form, smiling, apt for desire. She let Bonaparte survey her, and laughed at him before she rose and bade him sit, and thrust forward the one chair. Bonaparte sat at his ease and Balkis stood, white womanhood, against the red velvet that hid the walls.

Suleyman took the lamp and vanished a moment. When he brought it back it gave a keen white light and fragrant smoke. He set it so that the light came from behind him full into Bonaparte's eyes—Bonaparte's eyes in the white glare, his own invisible. He salaamed low. "Salute to Power, Power of the Earth." He pointed a long finger straight at Bonaparte's eyes. "Power is there, power that beats down all the powers of men. A scourge and a sword for men I see. I see thirst unquenchable for conquest and glory. I see the victor of the Austrian. I see him turn his gaze on the East and strive to wake her from her sleep. The East! The East!" his voice rose shrill, he laid his hand on Bonaparte's brow. "Ah, but the East sleeps sound. He does not know the East. She worships the Powers of the Air and he is of the earth. I see him turn again to western lands and grasp and grip Empire. Empire! Empire! It grows and grows greedily and grows. Empire! His own land is his, and more, and more. Kings kneel to him and beg to be his vassals. From the sea as far as the sea, all lands of the West are his. His legates, the eagles, fly over all. An heir is born, blood of his blood, King from the birth—the Empire waits an heir. And still he strives for more. A vast host is gathered. They march forth eastward—I see him in the van. On—and on—and on—ah, they pass beyond—beyond. Too far!" He shaded his eyes with his hand like a man gazing into the distance; let his hand fall with a cry of despair. "He is gone beyond my vision, he and his hosts. A star guides them. Whither? Whither?" His voice rose to a scream on the word, and on the word the glare of the light died suddenly and left empty red dark-

ness. Bonaparte, something dazed by the bombast, dazed by the heavily fragrant fumes of the lamp, sat still.

The darkness was gone again. Through two of the crystals came white shafts that met in the third and made it a fluid sphere of light close before his eyes. He could not look away from it. A chill hand came upon his brow. His own hand was laid upon a woman's breast.

"The veil is drawn," said Suleyman's voice. "Master, the veil is drawn. See, if thou darest. See!"

And in that fluid light a film gathered and darkened. Bonaparte saw himself, and towering above him some vast vague form, saw his own grim strength and the dim mocking features of the Sphinx. . . . All grew misty and faded into light again.

"The veil is drawn." Suleyman's voice droned. "The veil is drawn. See!"

Again a film gathered in the light and Bonaparte saw the lofty arches of Notre-Dame. There he stood himself in purple robes upon a dais. Beside him was an old man in surplice and cope, crowned with a triple crown—the Pope. From his hands the anointing oil was shed on Bonaparte's brow. . . . And again the vision blurred and faded into light.

"See! See!" Suleyman droned. "If thou hast courage, see!"

Again the light was shadowed by a film. Again Bonaparte saw himself. Now he was on his white charger, and dim hosts rode behind him. But the way he went led to darkness. Even as he gazed a star rose pale in the gloom and grew and grew, and its clear rays shone upon his own brow. And all his hosts faded

out of the vision till he was alone, with the star bright above him.

"The veil is drawn," Suleyman droned. "Behold thy star! Behold——"

Some new thing grew in the vision—some vague being beneath the star—the star paled before it—some form——

With a wild cry Suleyman dashed it all aside, and the room was in red darkness. . . . a long while the silence and the dark endured. . . . Then came a grunt and a "Humph! What is the next act?" from Jean Dortan.

They heard the hiss of Suleyman's indrawn breath. He seemed to move unsteadily. Then the candles were lit, and they saw him, pale, with sweat glittering on his brow. Balkis was shrunk together on her cushions, watching them. "That is all. That is the end," said Suleyman nervously.

Bonaparte laughed. "It was a very pretty business, Master Suleyman. What do I pay? A dead man, is it?"

Suleyman shuddered. "Yes, yes. That is it," he said in a hurry.

Bonaparte clapped him on the shoulder. "You shall have him, and more. I do not lose sight of you, master wizard. Remember. You follow my destiny." Suleyman shuddered again. Bonaparte took Jean Dortan's arm and strode out.

Suleyman came to Balkis, and dropped down beside her. Her face was grey. "You saw it?" said Suleyman. She nodded. "It was the same—Marie Antoinette saw." She nodded again.

Then she gripped his hand. "You will not follow him now?" she cried.





“Soldiers of France, Forward!” Then They Roared at  
Him, and a Storm of Tattered Shakoes  
Went Tossing to the Sky



"We do not follow death," said Suleyman.

They sat together hand in hand till there was blundering knocking at the door, and they had brought into them the lifeless body of Colonel Moncade.

Bonaparte was gay beyond his wont as he rode back to camp. He expended much wit upon Jean Dortan, who, not being witty and having a profound contempt for mysteries, was monosyllabic. Berthier met him at his hut. "I have given orders for the parade, sir. But—Colonel Moncade is dead."

"The devil!" cried Bonaparte.

"The surgeons say it is a palsy of the heart or a flux of the brain," Berthier explained.

Bonaparte went into the hut where Moncade lay at length, pallid, calm, and still, and looked awhile. "Well, it is the better for him," he said at last, and turned away. "Have his body sent to the wizzard in the Rue François, Berthier. And now—on parade!" But he put on his finest uniform before he went.

It was an army vastly more soldierly than of old that he viewed as he rode down the hillside, sedate and calm. Carefully he made his inspection. Then he rode to the middle of the line. His voice rose like a trumpet. "Soldiers! You are hungry and naked. The Republic owes you much, but she has not money to pay her debts. I shall lead you into Italy, into the most fertile plains that the sun beholds. Rich provinces, opulent towns, shall be for your pleasure. Soldiers! with such a prospect before you, can you fail in courage and constancy? We march at dawn. Soldiers of France, forward!" Then they roared at him—judge how they roared at him—and a storm of tattered

shakoes went tossing to the sky, and they roared and roared again.

Bonaparte bade his generals of divisions dismiss their men, and meet him in his quarters. When he came there he found Jean Dortan waiting for him. "Eh, my captain," said Jean Dortan. "So the conjurer has bidden us advance?"

Bonaparte smiled. "My big Jean, your ideas are of the earth."

"My idea is," said Jean Dortan, struggling to give birth to it, "that this Colonel Moncade died very strangely, and this conjurer has a strange concern for him, and I want to know what he is doing with him."

"Go and see," said Bonaparte.

And Jean Dortan took a pair of orderlies with him.

When Colonel Moncade's body was borne in, Suleyman started to life from gloom. He made swift riddance of the bearers, and set his door fast. Balkis and he set to work on the body, swiftly, surely. They had the chest bare and the feet. On the feet and the palms of the hands they poured some pungent liquor. Suleyman forced open the mouth and distilled another liquor into it drop by drop. Balkis swayed the arms rhythmically to and fro. Suleyman took a tube and lit in it a powder that smouldered, and blew the dense smoke into Moncade's nostrils. Muscles in throat and thigh began to twitch. Moncade sneezed and moved. Then Suleyman caught him and, raising him, poured into him an alembic full of a greenish liquor. Moncade choked and gulped, and made strange noises. He put his hand to his head, and looked all

round him. His eyes were strangely dull, his pupils hugely distended. "Death," he muttered to himself, "it is death."

"No! Life!" cried Suleyman. "Life is in the body again."

Even as he spoke there was the squeak of the black boy's voice without the door. Suleyman yelled back an answer in the same eastern tongue. It was hardly spoken before Jean Dortan and his orderlies broke the door from its lock and plunged in. "Name of a dog, the dead is alive!" cried one, and recoiled. But Jean Dortan sprang at the amazed, amazing Moncade, who was breathing like a man after a dive. Suleyman came in his way and thrust him aside and with one swift movement overturned a burning candle into a box of powder. There was a spurt of greenish flame. Jean Dortan plunged at Moncade again, and Suleyman grappled with him. The whole room was filled with damp grey smoke that blinded. Still Jean Dortan wrestled with Suleyman, crying to the orderlies to seize Moncade. . . .

But the truth is they never tried. For when the smoke grew thin and Jean Dortan, coughing, with streaming eyes, saw Suleyman's face again, Balkis and Moncade were gone and the two orderlies, scared and pallid, in a corner. Jean Dortan cursed them for cowards, and, committing Suleyman to their care, proceeded to search the house. Since by that time Balkis was leading Moncade, who walked like a drunken man, out of the garden and away to M. Royou's house, Jean Dortan did not find them. At M. Royou's house Colonel Moncade was given a bath and a bed, and in good time other things.

But I wonder at times if he and Mademoiselle Royou were very happy.

Jean Dortan, in the worst of tempers, proceeded to hale Suleyman away to Bonaparte. Suleyman, though Jean Dortan swore at him frequently, said no word. At times he laughed a little. So that by the time they came to Bonaparte's hut Jean Dortan was near exploding wrath.

Twilight had fallen. The council of war was done and Bonaparte alone. Jean Dortan haled Suleyman into the presence and gushed out his wrathful tale: how he found Moncade not dead but alive, how Suleyman had tricked him, how it was plainly all a cheat, how——

Bonaparte beckoned Suleyman closer. The grey eyes smote keen. "Your life is on a sword's edge, wizard. Tell me truth now, or you shall never see another sun."

Suleyman laughed. "My body dies. What matter? It is but a fetter of the soul. Strike it off and I will thank you."

Bonaparte searched him through for a trace of fear, and found none. "You were not so brave a while ago, wizard. Who was in a sweat of fear for what I saw in the crystal?"

"It was not for what you saw. It was for what you did not see," said Suleyman.

"What?" Bonaparte started up quivering as a sword quivers. "How much of that was trick, rascal?"

"They were good tricks, were they not?" said Suleyman, with an easy laugh. Bonaparte gripped him fiercely. "Oh, I believe some of them myself. The star"—he drew Bonaparte with him to the door of the

hut and pointed. "See, there, under Sirius; that is your star." In the dark vault of the sky close under Sirius shone a star of reddish light.

While they looked, Suleyman gave a strange gasping sound. Then in a tone of weird intensity: "See! See!" and he laid his hand on Bonaparte's spine. . . . Beneath the red star some vague thing gathered—the star was dim behind it—the form of a man—a man, prone, distorted, with a stream of red from his neck. "See your star," said Suleyman hoarsely. He took his hand from Bonaparte's neck and Bonaparte swayed a little as he gazed up at that vision of death. . . .

Suleyman drew back a step, gave one swift glance round. His hands went to his bosom a moment. Then he dashed something upon the ground. There was a blinding flash of light. In the dead darkness that followed he was gone. Jean Dortan blundered after him in vain.

Bonaparte hardly heeded. Long and long he stood at gaze. . . .

In the morning in the dawn he led his army eastward. His campaign with death was begun.

## CHAPTER VI

### HOW HE LOVED CHILDREN

THE peaks of the seaward Alps were blue amid a violet sky. In the tiny village by the river all was dark still, and only the grey water's fret broke the peace of the dying night. Along the gloom of the road, across the pale millet fields, white-coat sentries leant drowsily on their muskets. . . . A keener blue stole upon mountain and sky. The fore dawn wind came chill from the snows. All the air was alive and murmurous.

Across the millet a ghostly sentry whistled shrill. Another whistled far down the road. Their comrades woke to watch and peered through the wavering, cheating light. The outermost man on the road ran forward a little way and stood at gaze again. There was plainly more sound than wind or stream could make. He yelled a challenge, had no answer but the growing sound, and fired his musket. Another sounded, and another. By window and door white coats tumbled out of the village houses and ran to and fro, unready, mishandled, blundering. Dim horsemen fled across the fields. Louder and louder sound came rolling up the road. The mellowing light broke upon a steel-flecked cloud of dust. On it came and on, a squadron at the gallop. The white-coat sentries clustered and fired a hopeless volley. Their comrades were struggling vainly with disorder. In a moment they were all overwhelmed and hurled out of the village, and scattered

into a thousand impotent units and brushed aside. Then the French hussars checked their speed and flung out a fan of scouts on front and flank again, and went easily on.

The eastern sky was crimson, the mountain snows stained to a rosy glow above the wide, green plain, when the Army of Italy came swinging through the village. It marched of nights and slept the days, that Army of Italy, and did both heartily. It was gay with success and a vision of the breakfast that would be supper, and it sang songs to the frightened village as it passed. But most of the village folk lurked behind barred doors. That the Frenchmen were angels of light for hapless Italy, General Bonaparte had said loudly and often. But Italy was not quite sure.

From one of the upland farms a sturdy peasant woman, bearing her babe, came down to the village. The passing army blocked her way. She had no fear of it, sat herself down on a boulder at the roadside, and watched the ranks swing by with wide, calm eyes. The babe began to press at her breast. All about her fell the morning light.

Bonaparte saw. He came riding on his white charger at the head of his staff. His face was pallid from the night march, but his eyes shone like stars of steel. In that glory of golden light he saw the mother and her babe, and a wordless cry broke from him, and he flung up his hand in salute. . . . And on he went with his army to Piacenza.

General Bonaparte was educating himself. He was a tyro in command when he came to Italy. All that the books could teach of generalship he knew, and some little of the nature of men and the power of powder.

But the rest, the swift practice and the strain of war, he had to learn amid the narrow passes of the seaward Alps and the swift rivers that cut the Lombard plain. It was well for him. To wield vast masses he had no skill, and for vast masses there was no room or use. The eye that saw where to strike, the unwearied will, the surge of energy—these were the powers of victory. Cramped in the valleys the Austrian general, old Beaulieu, could use no heavy force, and each day's tiny combat advanced General Bonaparte's education in tactics. But his methods, it was agreed by all scientific soldiers, were deplorable. One day Murat took prisoner a grey-haired Austrian brigadier, who complained with fluent bitterness. "Your general is abominable," he cried. "He knows absolutely nothing of the simplest rules. To-day he is in our rear, to-morrow on our flank, next day again in our front. Such violations of the principles of the art of war are intolerable." Beaulieu protested to his Government against the indignity of having to fight a commander who had never learnt the rudiments of his trade. But Bonaparte continued to fight his unprincipled combats, and always he was victorious, and always the Austrians cursed him for an ignoramus, and his men hailed him a genius, and he knew he was at school.

Perhaps it was more than his own fame and power he sought. Perhaps there were grand, vague designs in his brain. Perhaps he cheated himself, as he cheated others, into believing that he would make Italy a new land. "Men of Italy"—so his proclamations ran—"men of Italy, we are not foes, but friends. We bear arms, but they are the arms of freedom. We war not with you, but with tyrants. Too long has Italy been



divided against herself. Those who have torn her asunder have made you slaves. We come to free you and to make you one. Men of Italy, awake! Strike and be free! United, renew your ancient glories. Let the might of Italy create again the arts of Italy, and make her the pride of the world. Men of Italy, to arms!"

The men of Italy were in no hurry. The din of Bonaparte startled their blood and woke it from the sleep of centuries, but for action they were not nerved yet. Bonaparte thrust forward across Lombardy, and village and town stood aloof to watch him in wonder and fear.

It was not till he was over the Ticino, till he was into Fombio, that he came upon Ambrogio Rossi. Of Ambrogio Rossi you may have heard as a bad poet. He had the ill-luck to be that and a cripple. There is nothing else against him. He hated towns, and he had a taste for cows—wherein he has the sympathy of some good men. He was the only child of a notable tanner in Milan, and bred there. But certain abominable women mocked at his queer limbs (there is a poor, grim poem about it), and the lad begged leave to flee the town. He set up his home in the rich meadows between the Adda and the Ticino, and there all his life he and his cows made cheese, and he fathoms of poetry. Also, if there was a child lacking parents Ambrogio Rossi would take it in. He was a person of enthusiasms. He lived in dreams of Italy's great days: he looked for another Augustus to found anew the golden age of Saturn.

Ambrogio Rossi read Bonaparte's sounding proclamations, and—his heart was ever better than his taste

—believed. He glorified “the young god of war” in alarming verse. He preached him to the country folk, and they listened with a smile and a shrug and a stealthy sign against the evil eye. For after all, Ambrogio Rossi, though a kindly soul and eager father to the fatherless, was a cripple, and so of the same blood as the devil. When Bonaparte marched into Fombio, Ambrogio was much exalted.

Bonaparte sat at his ease in the inn devouring a chicken cooked with oil and onions when Jean Dortan announced a visitor for him. “Humph!” Bonaparte questioned, with his mouth full.

“He talks very bad French,” Jean Dortan complained. “All these people do if they talk at all. He says you are Augustus, and he is your Virgil and your Horace. I think he means that he is a poor devil of a poet. Do you want one?”

“My big Jean,” said Bonaparte, wiping his mouth, “I shall want a choir of them.”

Jean Dortan looked at Bonaparte distrustful of his wits. “Well!” says he. “This one has some angels of children.” And he went out to produce Ambrogio Rossi.

Ambrogio shambled in, one miserable leg working round the other, and stood bowing. He was wholly ugly. The distorted limbs, the bent body, were crowned by a big neckless head with stiff, bristly black hair. His features were deep-hewn and large and ill-shaped. The little eyes that blinked at Bonaparte had no certain colour.

“Master poet, all hail!” said Bonaparte with a smile, and Ambrogio bowed again.

Bonaparte looked at the children behind him.

Ambrogio beckoned them forward. "Pentesilea! Ettore! Do honour to the master of men," he cried in Italian. The girl and boy knelt and kissed Bonaparte's hand. He was plainly gratified. A rare smile warmed his eyes as he gazed down at them. They were good enough to see: a sturdy boy of the north with bright, fair hair and round cheeks, pink and white as the snow at dawn, a girl with dark red lips and face and neck of ivory, and eyes black as the wild curls of her hair. "I have here some odes to you, my lord," said Ambrogio, "in the manner of Horace. And the exordium of an epic on Italy born again by your aid: in this I emulate Virgil."

"Give me an ode or so," said Bonaparte, and swung round his chair and beckoned the children closer. They examined him awhile in the grave, judicial manner of childhood, and were satisfied and came to his side. Bonaparte lifted Pentesilea upon his knee. She was something frightened at that, and leant away from him and reached with swift fingers for Ettore's hand.

Ettore let her have it, but he laughed wisely, and: "She'll never be truly a soldier, you know," he confided to Bonaparte. "She always wants to hold hands."

"Oh!" Pentesilea renounced him. "It is not always. You untruth! And every one wants to hold hands sometimes, don't they?" she appealed to Bonaparte.

"I never knew a soldier who did not," said Bonaparte. "But hush now." For Ambrogio was swaying on his stick in his eagerness to recite.

"I hope it will be a bloody one," said Pentesilea in a loud whisper to Ettore.

The ode began: "Latest born of great Cæsar's

stock, thou that majestically drivest the blazing chariot of red war upon the pale foes of the good Italian land, hail and thrice and four times hail! I sing thy glory and the throng of thy deeds for the fair crown of all the lands of the world." Never mind the rest. It was the best he had. And Bonaparte liked it well: his favourite poet was Ossian.

"It is well done. It is great," said he at the end, and probably believed it. Then with that manner of the stage that was nature in him: "It is great as my own deeds!" he cried, and Pentesilea looked at him with wide eyes. "Your fame and mine shall go down the ages together."

"In the good cause of Italy!" cried Ambrogio Rossi, his little eyes aflame.

"Ah, yes. For Italy," said Bonaparte, and began to play with Pentesilea's hair.

"You must not do that," said Pentesilea. "I am going to be a soldier."

Bonaparte pinched her chin. "It will be enough to be the wife and mother of soldiers."

"Is that as nice?" said Pentesilea dubiously.

"Of course not," Ettore assured her. "You cannot have the nicest things. You are a girl."

Pentesilea's black eyes became very large. "It is not fair, is it?" she appealed to Bonaparte.

"It is more honour to have the harder tasks," said Bonaparte.

Pentesilea's lips were incredulous. "But I am going to be a soldier," she insisted.

Bonaparte laughed, and turned from the children's straight lissom bodies to glance curiously at the cripple. "Are they your children, poet?" he said.

Ambrogio flushed and shuffled his feet. The hope of children was not for him. "They call me father," he said.

"Why, of course!" cried Pentesilea, and her eyes gave Bonaparte challenge. "He is the very dearest father in all the world." Ambrogio stumped forward and laid his big hand on her shoulder, and she put down her cheek to caress it.

But Ettorre was only interested in Bonaparte. His round blue eyes were set upon the combatant strength of that face. "When did you begin to be a soldier?" Ettorre asked.

"I was a soldier as soon as I was a boy," said Bonaparte, smiling.

"I was like that," said Ettorre with satisfaction. "You know I am going to be a great soldier and make Italy all one country."

Ambrogio smiled. "If our lord here does not do it first," said he.

"Oh! Oh, will you?" Ettorre was crestfallen.

"Tell me"—Pentesilea was in a hurry—"tell me, do you have to be very big to be a soldier? You are not very big, you know," she reminded Bonaparte.

"I think I am big enough," said Bonaparte.

"There!" She was relieved. "Ettorre said I wouldn't ever be big enough. I am sure I shall be as big as you. Oh! but I suppose you have to be very brave? Have you been brave?"

"Tell, oh, do tell!" cried Ettorre, pressing against him.

Bonaparte, in no way loath, began to talk of his deeds. Of his duel at Valence he told them, and strange Corsican forays and the grim wrestle with the English

seamen at Toulon, the storm of the redoubt and the frenzied building of the batteries, and the tempest of flame and death.

The children gazed at him, rapt in a trance of delight, their eyes dilated, their breath short and quick. When he was done they could not speak, but still they gazed at him, and Penthesilea stroked his arm timidly.

"Come now, children," said Ambrogio, "thank our lord and come away."

"Oh, no! No!" cried Penthesilea, clinging to Bonaparte's arm.

"You can go, father," said Ettore curtly over his shoulder.

Bonaparte laughed. Ambrogio Rossi looked at him with no love, and then down at the children, and his ugliness was veiled in a sad, tender smile. "Come, my dears, come with me," he said gently.

But it was plain they liked Bonaparte better, and with difficulty, bearing swift angry glances, and seeing their eyes turn eagerly again to Bonaparte, Ambrogio shepherded them away.

Bonaparte watched them with a strange kindness in his eyes and something of hunger. "A good night!" he cried. "A good night! Come to me in the morning and you shall see my soldiers."

He heard Penthesilea's delightful cry, "Fine!" as they went out, and a gay, glad chatter growing fainter.

A while after, as Bonaparte sat over a map of Adda valley, Murat swaggered in, his hussar uniform mud from plume to spur. Bonaparte signed him to a chair.

"They are all over the river," said Murat, sitting down with a grunt of weariness, "and over the river

I cannot get. They've guns in position by the bridge at Lodi."

"How many?" snapped Bonaparte.

"Too many for me," said Murat with a shrug. "And the river is in spate with the snow-water from here to Como. Devil a ford or a ferry."

"It is the bridge at Lodi, then?" Bonaparte asked. Murat nodded. "I must know what their strength is there." But Murat shrugged. "Find out to-morrow," said Bonaparte.

"I shall find out if any one can," said Murat.

"That is true," said Bonaparte with a smile, and Murat pulled himself up and swaggered out.

So in the morning Murat went off with his cavalry upon a new reconnaissance. But again he failed. That bridge at Lodi was cunningly held, and what force the Austrians had he could not guess. The river ran far too swift and deep for horsemen.

Bonaparte was writing his sixty-ninth dispatch to those troublesome Directors in Paris when Pentesilea's red lips and black eyes appeared on the other side of the table. "You promised!" said Pentesilea.

Bonaparte beckoned to her, and when she came, kissed those delectable lips. Pentesilea did not object, but he beheld in the doorway Ettore's round eyes accusing him of conduct unworthy a soldier. With one arm round Pentesilea, Bonaparte finished his dispatch in two curt sentences, and rose and put on his hat and gravely saluted Pentesilea to her joy, and led her out.

Ambrogio Rossi was there with Ettore, and he bowed low to Bonaparte. "My children do not trouble you, my lord?" he asked anxiously.

“Children are the most tolerable of all things,” said Bonaparte.

Ambrogio winced. “Is that all?” he said, half to himself.

“It saves loving them too much to remember that they will be men and women,” said Bonaparte.

Ambrogio flushed. It seems that a sneer at mankind always hurt him. The children were staring at Bonaparte. They had not understood, but they felt a discord. “I do not think one can love too much, my lord,” said Ambrogio.

Bonaparte gave a queer laugh. Then he looked down at the two children. “Who wants to see my cannon?” he asked. But they hesitated a moment. There was something unlovely in his eyes.

Then Ettorre became brave and sidled up to him. “I suppose you could not have one of your cannons fired?”

“Come and see,” said Bonaparte, and strode on with the children dancing round him.

Ambrogio followed painfully, falling farther and farther behind. The children had forgotten him altogether, and he watched their wild gladness. Then came a heavy hand on his shoulder and Jean Dortan’s: “What, comrade! Have they left you? Well, our Little Man makes every one follow him. But he’ll do them no harm. He loves children better than anything but himself.”

Ambrogio turned suddenly on Jean Dortan: “And do children love him?”

Jean Dortan rubbed his big chin as he looked at Ambrogio. “That is what I do not know,” he admitted. “But he wants them to.” Still he considered Ambrogio.



"You please me, you know. Come, talk with me till they are back. I have never talked to a poet."

Ambrogio bowed. "I am wholly at your service," said he, but he looked wistfully after his children.

Jean Dortan saw it. "What, you like to keep them in sight? Well, that is wholesome. Your arm, poet."

So, resting on Jean Dortan's sturdy arm, Ambrogio came stumping behind Bonaparte. "My lord your general, he will do great things for Italy?" said he to Jean Dortan.

"I have known our Little Man a year or two, and I do not know what he can't do," said Jean Dortan. "But what do you expect?"

"Ah, my friend, I see your general cast down the tyrants and the barriers of tyranny. I see all Italy one nation again, mighty in war and great in law, and all the arts of peace. It is for the soul of Italy your general fights. He will bring us back the golden age. I praise him, I honour him with the greatest heroes."

"Why, so do I," Jean Dortan admitted, but he looked at Ambrogio queerly.

Bonaparte had brought the children to the artillery lines, and they were clambering joyously over wheels and limbers. Bonaparte had a gun horsed for them, and while they watched the hurry of the men, "I suppose you know how to fire a cannon yourself?" said Penteseila.

Bonaparte admitted it with a smile. "I would have to be grown up first, wouldn't I?" Penteseila inquired wistfully.

"Girls don't grow up. They're only women," said Ettore brusquely. "Are gunners very brave? Which

are the bravest soldiers? I suppose generals have to be very brave?"

"Generals have to be brave with other men's lives," said Bonaparte. "That is hardest of all."

"I am going to be a general," said Ettore. "Oh, does a general ride a horse?"

"He always wants to be the general," Pentesilea complained, making a face at him. "What is the next bravest thing to a general, please?"

"A spy, perhaps," said Bonaparte with a smile.

"Then I shall be a spy," said Pentesilea.

Bonaparte started and looked curiously at the pure, childish face, the deep, dark eyes.

"Will you make me a general?" Ettore appealed.

Bonaparte turned with a laugh and saluted him. The field gun stood ready now with its horses. "My general," said Bonaparte, "there is your artillery. What will you do with it?" Ettore put his finger in his mouth.

Bonaparte cried an order to the gunners, and off went the gun at a gallop, wheeled and came back, and halted again and unlimbered. "They are going to let it off!" cried Pentesilea in an ecstasy of delight. Next moment the twelve-pounder flamed and roared. Pentesilea looked swiftly at Ettore, and Ettore at her. "I did not," said Pentesilea indignant. "I did not shiver one bit. And you are horrid."

"She is rather good for a girl," Ettore confided to Bonaparte.

Then the gunners made wonderful driving for them and they rejoiced, and Ambrogio, who had a cripple's delight in the sight of swift movement. Bonaparte took them on through the lines and put a squadron of

cuirassiers through its paces for them, and sent them away intoxicated with pleasure. Dancing round Ambrogio they went, and Bonaparte stood watching them a long while.

"They are angels, those children, in fact," said Jean Dortan at his elbow.

Bonaparte turned. The look in his eyes was not that which one would use for angels.

That night Murat came in wearied again and out of heart. "There is no way over this curst river but that curst bridge," he announced. "And whether it's an army or a rear-guard they have there the devil knows, who made the curst country. You'll have to retreat on Piacenza, Captain Cannon."

"This army cannot afford to retreat," said Bonaparte. "It does not believe in itself enough."

"Then you'll break your head," said Murat.

"When have you known me fail, Murat?"

The next morning at dawn, Murat and he rode up the crest of the hills above the river, and scanned the rolling plain beyond where the Austrians were hidden. "As I told you," Murat cried. "There is nothing to see."

Bonaparte studied the crest of the hills a while. Then he turned, and led on down till they came to a ruddy stone homestead circled with mulberry trees. Pentecilea and Ettore came running to meet them. "Is there any one here would like to ride?" cried Bonaparte, and they both made a plunge at his stirrup. "Trust them to me!" he called to Ambrogio in the doorway, tossed Pentecilea to Murat, swung Ettore up in front of him, and went off. Ambrogio stood in the sunlight desolate.

Bonaparte galloped to his quarters. Laughing and

flushed from the speed and mad of eye the children were set down, and he hustled them in. Then with Pentesilea on one knee and Ettorre by the other: "Now!" said he. "Who was it wanted to be a soldier?" The children cried out together. "And I want to make you both soldiers for Italy." Pentesilea clutched him, and gave a gurgle of joy. Ettorre's round eyes grew larger and rounder, and he chuckled. But the grey light in Bonaparte's eyes was keen and cold. "Look you, soldiers of mine, it is like this. Somewhere beyond the river the Austrians are waiting to fight me. But I do not know how many Austrians there are, or how far away they are. I want you to go and find out and tell me."

"Oh!" Ettorre's face fell. "I thought it would be fighting."

"Silly!" said Pentesilea over her shoulder. Then eagerly to Bonaparte, "It's being a spy?" Bonaparte nodded. His eyes were steady and cold. "And that is the bravest thing of all except you," she cried. "I am going. Oh, you can stay if you like, Ettorre. I am going."

"Of course I shall go," said Ettorre sulkily; "I shall be leader."

"This will be the way," said Bonaparte. "You will pretend that you are selling olives. See, there are two little barrels of them. When you come to the bridge at Lodi you will find Austrians in white coats on guard there. You will ask them to buy olives. Do not sell too cheaply. Then say you are going to sell the rest to the army. Count how many strides it is from the bridge to where you come upon the army. When you have found it, try to sell the men more olives. But,

above all, see how big that army is. You know how big mine is. See if that is bigger. See if it is less. See if there are any guns, and try to count how many. But always pretend that you are there just to sell clives. Do not let them think you want anything else. Do not say one word of me. That would spoil it all. That would show you are no good soldiers."

"It is easy. It is like a game," said Ettore somewhat sulkily. But Pentesilea's black eyes were aglow.

"It will be a great deed for Italy," said Bonaparte, staring full at Ettore.

"Oh, well—of course, I can do it easily," said the boy.

Pentesilea sprang down from Bonaparte's knee. "Oh, it is fine, fine!" she cried, and she caught up one of the barrels of olives and came to Bonaparte with a flick of a curtsy and a roguish smile. "Will it please you buy my pretty olives, kind soldier?" said she. Then, "Oh, Ettore, you do look stupid. Come!" Kissing her hand to Bonaparte, out she went.

Ettore followed her grumbling: "It's very well for a girl."

When they were gone Bonaparte leant back and looked up at Murat with a smile. Then he gave orders to have four batteries brought into position on the hills above the river.

There are those who keep their worst abuse of him for this affair of the child spies. Bonaparte himself, I am very sure, saw no harm in it. It was incredible that any sapient Austrian could detect a spy in those eyes of springtime. Or if by a miracle they were accused, no man would have the heart to kill the children. They would be safe enough. That it was vile

to use a child on a spy's work, to plunge the clean heart of a child into all the filth of the intrigue of war—you would not expect Bonaparte to feel that. Yet they say, and I profess I believe it, they say he loved all children. A dwarf love? A love with no power in it? It was all he had for the best things. That is the tragedy of him.

The children tripped away, Ettore something glum, Pentesilea exultant in a new game of make-believe, to the long bridge that towered above the brown, swift stream of the Adda. The white-coat outposts were lounging upon their arms. Pentesilea came up smiling with her little barrel of olives.

"Ha, my lass, and where are you from?" says an officer in clumsy Italian.

"From Fombio, if you please, sir, with olives to sell. See, such fine olives!"

"Humph! Why don't you sell them to the French?"

Behind her smiles Pentesilea reflected: "Because I thought you would give me more money, sir," said she.

The Austrian laughed. "Well, you are a frank babe. Is that your brother? Has he olives, too? How much will you take for them all?"

Pentesilea was frightened. If she sold all the olives to the outpost, they could not go on to the army. She looked anxiously at Ettore. Ettore took a step forward. "You would not have enough money to buy them all," he said stolidly.

The Austrian laughed loud. "Heaven, you are a pair of baby misers! Now"—he brought out an Austrian florin—"how many olives will that buy?"

Pentesilea gave him a handful, and another, and another. The Austrian waited for more. Pentesilea

shook her head. "Oh no," said she, "I have given you a great many because I like you."

"So," said the Austrian grinning. "And will you give me a kiss too, little one."

"Oh!" Penthesilea flushed delicately and drew back. It was strangely hard to kiss when you were cheating.

Ettorre came in front of her. "You must not be rude to my sister," said he.

The Austrian slapped his thigh. "Brave babes, by thunder! Here's your florin. If you sell all your olives as well you'll be rich."

"Shall we have far to go to find more soldiers, please," said Penthesilea timidly.

"The inside of a mile, sweetheart. Wait, we'll sell you some more here." Much against their will the children were kept a while longer while he joked at them with his brother officers, and chattered their olives.

When they were off again, hurrying over the long bridge, "He was nice," said Penthesilea in a whisper. "It's a little horrid, isn't it, Ettorre?"

"One hundred and one, one hundred and two," Ettorre mumbled. He was counting his paces as Bonaparte had bidden.

It was five hundred of the childish strides before they mounted the first ridge of the rolling plain beyond the bridge, and there found a battery cunningly hidden. The gunners were lying about their guns. Ettorre nudged Penthesilea forward, and she went with a timid, wintry smile, dumbly offering her olives. The gunners had no appetite for olives, and they swore at her, and she, used only to kindness, shrank away. Then one fellow amused himself by gripping her soft arm and

twisting it till she screamed. Ettore ran up and pulled her away, and they scurried off. Then, with the pain tears standing in her eyes, "Ettore, it is horrible," she gasped. "Please let us go back."

"O coward!" said Ettore scornfully. "I am going on. There were forty-five guns there."

Biting her lip she trudged on in Ettore's footprints. It was some two thousand more of their steps before they came upon the Austrian camp. They wandered in among the tents, Ettore offering his olives here and there, and Pentesilea hiding herself close behind him, till at last they found a boisterous captain who tossed Pentesilea up on his shoulder and put her and her olives up to auction among his mess. Ettore stood away, more concerned for the numbers of the tents than her. Ten florins were bid, and the bid taken, and they jeered at Pentesilea, white and frightened, and made her buy her freedom with a kiss. When at last she was let go, she caught Ettore's hand and dragged him on as fast as she could run. "You are a silly coward," said Ettore, forcing her to a walk.

"I hate them. I hate it," Pentesilea gasped.

"You're stupid," said Ettore. "I've done it all splendidly. I know it all. I wonder what he will make me?"

But Pentesilea was only concerned to hurry. With no more troubles, with nothing worse than a kindly word from their first friend at the bridge, they were back again and away past Lodi town to Bonaparte.

Bonaparte was in his quarters with Berthier and dispatches, but dispatches and Berthier were thrust aside when they came in, and, "Well, my pocket generals?" Bonaparte cried.



"I know it! I know it all!" Ettore panted. "It is five hundred of my steps from the bridge before you come to the guns, and they have forty-five guns, I think, or forty-eight. And then two thousand and seven more steps, and we came to an army—it is a big army—I think it is as big as yours. I counted six rows of tents, and there were twenty at least in a row. They are all big men, bigger than yours." He stopped breathless.

Bonaparte gazed past him away into the vague, and his eyes glittered. . . . Then he turned suddenly to Berthier, and gave curt orders for new artillery positions, and as Berthier ran out he followed. He strode away to Masséna and then to Lannes, and the children pattered after him, Ettore glad-eyed and eager, Pentésilea clinging to Ettore.

Now bugles cried along the lines, and everywhere regiments were running to arms, a swift medley of blue and steel and scarlet. The children's hearts throbbed to the wild colour. Bonaparte walked on toward the river alone, his hands laced behind his back, his head erect, his eyes gazing away through space. Beyond Lodi town close above the river he came to a stand, and keenly searched the farther bank. Berthier and Marmont and others of his staff and the huge Jean Dortan came riding up. Jean Dortan saw the little folks with a shout of horror. "Name of a fat dog! This is no place for you, little ones. Hie away home!"

Bonaparte turned—Pentésilea was shrinking, Ettore stood his ground defiantly—Bonaparte gave his thin-lipped smile. "Let be!" he said. "Let be! They will see war to-day."

Jean Dortan grumbled something, but before it was

out Bonaparte sent him off for a horse, and he went, grumbling still and beckoning to the children. But Ettorre would not go, though Pentesilea was eager and urgent. He wished the fight.

Now Bonaparte's blue-coated infantry were coming up by brigades at a gay, lilted step. The Austrian guard on the bridge saw the movement, and sent off gallopers to their battery and the main army. They fell back from the bridge head, and began to tear up the timbers. Bonaparte spoke to one of his staff. A signal was waved to the French gunners on the hill, and at once the green hillside vomited flame, and on the bridge broke a tempest of spattering shot. The white-coat Austrians ran like rabbits, but some were left in a ghastly mass.

Pentesilea gasped something, and caught at Ettorre's hand. But Ettorre shook her off. He was gazing at Bonaparte with mad, bright eyes. Bonaparte's face was set in pale strength. He thundered an order through the din, and one of his staff was away to the infantry. Lannes formed a dense column, and hurled it at the bridge. . . . On the farther shore they could see the white coats digging madly at the piers. Beyond, the main army was coming in a hurry.

The head of the French column was upon the bridge when the Austrian batteries opened fire. Blasted by that iron tempest the column reeled, and its front ranks melted away and it blenched and wavered and staggered back disorderly.

Then Bonaparte gave a cry of rage, sprang forward, and rushed down to the beaten column—he and his staff after him, and Ettorre dashing among the horses. Pentestilea stood alone all trembling, while the air

boomed with that devil's thunder of artillery: she looked at the ghastly harvest of death and torment: she turned and fled wildly for home. Her black hair streamed on the wind. Her face was white and writhen with the misery of slaughter.

Grey smoke rolled in cloud-banks down the valley, and the green bosoms of the hills on either side were seared with flames. The white-coat Austrian army, clumsily jammed together, was in haste now, was now not far away. Shouting madly with fierce, mad gestures, Bonaparte was forming his column of attack again. His eyes shot grey flame, his bronze voice clove the din. "Soldiers! Are you cowards, are you dastards? Do your hearts beat the blood of France? Then on! On! Victory! Victory! Soldiers, who follows Bonaparte?" He waved his sword in a grey circle of light overhead. They answered him with one deep roar. He sprang forward to the bridge head, and on through the storm of death.

They thrust after him, on and on and on, though their ranks were riddled and rent, on and on, all mad and yelling with the lust of fight, on over writhing, bleeding comrades, on through hell for the throat of the foe. They were over the long bridge, and they trampled down the Austrian skirmishers and dashed on, falling into open order as they ran, for the battery that had wrought all the wrack. The Austrians stood by their guns to the last. With the flame leaping out in their faces, with the close shot tearing ghastly wounds from them, they hurled themselves into the emplacements, and caught the gunners and slew. Then, panting and reeking blood and sweat, they leant on the burning guns a moment for breath. Masséna, his lips

black, his face pitted with powder, yelled to them in vain to turn the guns on the Austrian advance. For a while they could no more.

There was no need. Once he had them across the river, once the mad charge on the battery was fairly launched, Bonaparte had sprung aside. He sprang to the river-bank, he waved his arms in signal to Augereau. And Augereau, cursing him, they say, for taking the cream of the fight, poured fresh brigades across the bridge. The Austrians saw the serried blue ranks marshalled against them. Their hearts were shattered already by the sight of that madmen's charge. They halted and changed ground, and manœuvred clumsily. Before Masséna, raving marvellously, had brought the captured guns to bear on them, they began to fall back. Murat's horsemen were hurried to the front and launched upon them, and rode all round them, maddening the huddled ranks as they fell back on Mantua.

"Oh, you are great, you are great!" said a voice at Bonaparte's side. Bonaparte turned with a start to see Ettorre. The boy's cheeks and his bright hair were grim with blood. His eyes glared madly. "I was with you!" he cried, and he shook a broken sword in his hand.

Bonaparte looked at the child and something of passionate love lit his eyes: "My little hero!" Bonaparte cried, and caught the child and tossed him up on his shoulder. "Salute!" he shouted. "Salute the child who is god of war!"

Augereau's battalions swinging by put shako on bayonet and roared cheers for "The Little Corporal and his baby."

The child waved his wet, broken sword at them and screamed wild answers. Bonaparte lifted him down and caught him to his breast and kissed the blood-marked cheeks, and the child chattered to him shrill. About them Bonaparte's staff were gathering again, and the stolid Berthier and some looked at the child queerly, but some began to play with him. The child struck back at them with his broken sword viciously, glaring, and they drew away. He stood by Bonaparte, quivering, frenzied, a ghastly, monstrous vision—childhood in the grip of the blood-lust.

Bonaparte laughed and took him by the hand, and "Come, Ettore," he said, and turned back toward the bridge.

Ettore went, muttering to himself and making his sword whistle.

They came over the wounded and the dead, over bodies rent asunder, past the shriek and the moan and impotent writhing of that vast agony of torment. Slowly the pain of it stung through the child's madness. . . . The whirl of the sword was checked, and it hung loose in his hand. His dilated eyes shrank again, the wild light in them died. He looked all about him, along that bridge of death, and shuddered and gripped Bonaparte's hand more firmly and drew closer to his side.

But Bonaparte strode on over dying and dead, his head held high, the fierce strength of his face set stark against the mellow evening light, his eyes cleaving at the unseen. His own stricken men lifted their heads to cheer him with the last of their breath, and fell back happy as they saw his hand move to the salute. Their lives had won that.

Now Ettore was walking uneasily, starting away and aside to shun the dead, now he brushed uneasily at his stained brow, and his eyes spoke fear. They were all but over the bridge when there came a hoarse cry: "In the name of the Christ, lift up his head!"

Ettore started and checked. Bonaparte was dragging him on, but "Let me go, let me go!" he cried, and he wrenched himself away.

The kindly captain of the Austrian outpost, the man who had let the children pass and given them their chance to spy, lay stricken and helpless, and the blood of another man's wound was pouring over his face. The corpse lay upon his chest.

"Why, what have you to do with them?" said Bonaparte coolly, as he bent to help. But Ettore only strove hard.

The Austrian captain, freed of the weight and the blood-stream, looked up, with dull eyes encrimsoned, to see Ettore and Bonaparte. "You—you little viper!" he groaned. "The curse of Judas upon you," and he struck at Ettore with his maimed hand.

Ettore shrank away. Bonaparte caught his hand and strode on. "So one is thanked," he said with a smile.

But Ettore did not answer.

On the farther shore Jean Dortan was waiting with Bonaparte's white charger. "Salute, Captain Cannon," he cried with a smile, and then with something of affection in his deep voice, "My Captain Cannon!"

Bonaparte was smiling back at him. "We go forward, Jean," said he.

"You will always go forward, I think," said Jean Dortan, beaming broadly. Then his eye fell on Ettore's plight, and he grew grave.

"This is my young hero," said Bonaparte. "Salute him, Jean."

But Jean Dortan did nothing of the kind.

Bonaparte mounted, swung Ettore up before him, and spurred off to his quarters. . . .

Pentesilea had fled away home. There sat Ambrogio Rossi all alone, looking wistfully away through the trees. Breathless and trembling she cast herself into his arms and clung to him.

He felt the tumult of her heart. "Dear, my dear," he whispered, stroking her hair. "What is it, then? What is amiss?"

"They are fighting," Pentesilea panted; "they are fighting, and it is my fault."

"What!" cried Ambrogio, as well he might.

Breathless, quivering, all in disorder, she panted out her tale.

Ambrogio was soon more troubled than she. "He—he made spies of you!" Ambrogio stammered with rage.

Pentesilea nodded, hiding her face from him.

Ambrogio's voice broke in a groan. "My children! My children!" he muttered.

"Ah, it is bad, it is bad," Pentesilea sobbed. "I see now, but I didn't know. And they are killing!"

"Where is Ettore?" said Ambrogio.

"I—I left him. He wanted to fight. Oh, I never saw Ettore's eyes like that. I was afraid. It wasn't our Ettore. He wanted to kill." Ambrogio was reaching for his sticks. He set Pentesilea down, he raised himself. "Do not leave me," Pentesilea wailed.

"I must find Ettore," said Ambrogio.

Pentesilea lingered, torn between fear and love,

Then she sped after the cripple, and linked her hand in his arm. "It is all me, it is all my fault," she cried, "I wanted to be a spy. Ettore didn't. I—I made him bad."

"We must find Ettore," said Ambrogio.

"I—want——" said Pentesilea, and her lip trembled.

So the cripple and the child went out to do battle with Bonaparte.

They saw him from far, riding his white charger back to his quarters, and they awaited him by the door. Bonaparte set Ettore on the ground, and Ambrogio paled as he saw the blood on the child's brow and hair, and stretched out a nervous hand to him. But Ettore looked at the cripple strangely and held aloof. Bonaparte vaulted down, and Pentesilea shrank away from him behind Ambrogio. Ambrogio still eyed Ettore greedily, and his pale lips were moving in silence. "What, poet!" cried Bonaparte. "Take heart! He is not hurt. He is——"

"Not hurt!" Ambrogio quivered at a sudden stab of pain. "Not hurt!" he repeated, and gazed into Bonaparte's eyes, and a queer, mocking, mournful laugh came from him.

"My Ettore has the soul of a conqueror! Come in! Come in!" He thrust Ambrogio and the children into the room before him. "He has helped me win such a victory as the world has not seen. Come, poet, you shall write me an ode on it."

"There is no true poet will ever sing of you," said Ambrogio, still intent upon the grey gleam of Bonaparte's eyes.

"What!" the great brow darkened. "What does that mean?"



"It means that you will never do anything great."

Bonaparte laughed. "Well, poet, I have won a little fight or two already."

"Winning battles—that is not great!" Ambrogio cried. "You! Ah, I thought you were the angel of deliverance of Italy—that you would make us a nation, and give us the spirit of life. No! You'll never help the world. You'll never do anything that endures. You are vile in the heart of your soul, and all your deeds must be shot with baseness. Oh, it is no man but a fiend that defiles children. You—you take my children to work your foulest needs, you teach them the infamy of the men whom all men scorn. Oh, to teach children shame, that——"

"Ah, bah, this is a fool's bombast," said Bonaparte with an easy laugh. "You are tiresome, poet. Away with you. What, Ettore! Let cripples call you villain if soldiers call you hero?"

"Do you think I would leave a child of mine with you?" cried Ambrogio. He was flushed and trembling.

"My poor poet, it is not you leave him, it is he who leaves you. You have had enough of a cripple for your nurse, have you not, Ettore? You'll rest with me and be the army's hero, soldier, master of men, conqueror of the world?"

"Ettore," said the cripple gently.

Ettore looked from one to the other. His face was livid now beneath the blood-stains; wide, wondering, frightened eyes gazed at them. The cripple's ugliness was veiled in a wistful smile. Bonaparte's thin lips were smiling too, but there were furrows in the great dome of brow, and the grey gleam beneath struck at Ettore's will. . . . Ettore moved from the cripple a

little way, and looked full at Bonaparte. He trembled. . . .

"I want you, Ettore," said the cripple gently.

Bonaparte laughed. "He wants you, Ettore! Will you spend your life a crutch for a cripple? Stay with me and have the soldiers cheer you out of the blood of the battle they've won." He gripped the child's eyes with his, and striding forward: "Away!" he cried to Ambrogio. "We soldiers have no use for cripples," and he thrust Ambrogio to the door, so that he reeled and staggered, scraping with his sticks, and fell against Penteselea. Penteselea held him up, every nerve of her slight strength at strain, and there broke from her a harsh, tearing sob.

At that Ettore woke. With some wild cry he darted forward and caught Ambrogio's arm. "Come! Ah, come away!" His voice was shrill, he was cold and shivering with fear. Penteselea turned to him with wild, pitiful joy, and snatched his hand a moment . . . the two children clung to the cripple and dragged him on.

But Ambrogio hung back and lingered in the doorway, and turned to see Bonaparte again. Bonaparte's stark strength was drawn and seared with the pain of yearning and despair. . . . Ambrogio looked long, and his eyes were wistful. "God forgive you—God help you," he said.

"Get you gone," Bonaparte thundered, with a wild sweep of his arm, and the cripple went after the weeping children.

Bonaparte was left alone. Bonaparte sat, his great brow lowering, his lips curved into a sneer, his hands clenched. . . . He muttered to himself a little. . . .

Jean Dortan came in with a bustle, "Salute, and again salute, my general. Never was such a victory."

Bonaparte looked up with a sour smile.

"Eh, where is the child?" cried Jean Dortan.

"The child . . . has gone home," said Bonaparte.

"That is good," said Jean Dortan.

Bonaparte stared at him dully. "Good?" he muttered. "Who knows what good is?"

## CHAPTER VII

### HOW HE MET AN IRISHMAN

HE found a good many people to hate before all was done, but I suppose there was always a place for Giacomo Connell. You shall hear his reasons.

Now, it is illuminating to remember that he had always the least amiable characteristics of a child. He was peevish if things went ill with him, he was angry if people were not vastly interested in him, he was despondent and alarmed when he did not know what would happen next. In a happy state, beset by all these troubles, you find General Bonaparte riding over the marshes of the Adige. The grey twilight fog hides earth and sky. His staff are somewhere about him, but each man of them is wholly concerned to keep his own horse out of the water-cuts. Somewhere away on the right is the broken rumble of a squadron. They had been making a reconnaissance against the Austrians at Caldiero when the fog and the night surprised them. Now, no one knows anything—where the Austrians are, or where themselves are, or where they will be next. The fog blackens as the last of the twilight dies. The sounds of the march are duller and every moment more and more broken. Each man knows that the darkness is scattering them, and tries vainly to keep touch. For the water-channels are deep and eccentric, and drive them all ways. Horses and men, every one is tired, for every one has been worked to the last

of his strength in these desperate days about Arcola. Every one has his temper raw, for things have steadily gone amiss, and the angriest temper of all is Bonaparte's.

Each man prisoned in the solitude of the fog was taking care for himself, finding the best way he could, save one who rode upon Bonaparte's quarter, meeting better or worse equably so he had Bonaparte close. Bonaparte was muttering to himself and fidgeting in the saddle with loose rein. There was the natural result. His horse stumbled on the brink of a water-cut, went down on its knees and flung him over its head. A curse and a splash were not far heard, but his companion Jean Dortan was down swiftly for a heavy man and groping after him. It was a moment or two before Bonaparte's sodden collar was gripped and he was hauled out shivering. He proceeded to swear at his horse and beat it violently about the head.

"After all," said Jean Dortan philosophically, "if you had stayed with him you would not have got wet."

Bonaparte gave out an oath or two more, but he spared the horse and hauled himself into the saddle, and they went on following the stream, since they could not cross it there. . . . It took them a twisting, confusing path. The sounds of the march came to them from every side. And all about them was heavy, clogging darkness. . . . More than once Jean Dortan shouted. Faintly sometimes a shout answered, but the fog mantle choked the sound, and no one came near them, and they came upon no one. So on, aloof, alone, while the chill bit into them, and the wet fog clung like an opalescent shroud. . . . Till Jean Dortan checked

sharply: "If you know where you are going, my captain," he cried, "let us go there. But I'll swear I do not."

Bonaparte (his teeth were chattering) pointed through the gloom to a faint yellowish glow.

"And what will that be?" said Jean Dortan dubiously.

"Watchfires, fool," growled Bonaparte, and went on.

"The watchfires of Will-o'-the-wisp," quoth Jean Dortan, but he followed.

They came nearer and the glow brightened, and out of it came a cheery song:

*Nos vagabunduli,  
Laeti jucunduli,  
Tara tantara teino.*

"Stop you here," muttered Jean Dortan with his hand on Bonaparte's rein, "that may be German," and he went on alone to hail with a thundering "*Qui vive?*"

"A friend to a friend, and the devil to a foe," the cheery voice of the singer answered in French.

"French?" Jean Dortan questioned sceptically, but he approached.

"Citizen of the world—till I am a citizen of heaven."

"The devil will never get there," said Jean Dortan, who was a person of literal mind.

"I'll be ready to argue that with you," said the singer, who now, as Jean Dortan came close, appeared sprawling comfortably on straw by his fireside, a lean fellow in fantastic grey clothes, with a face like a ruddy moon.

"Do you know where we are?" Jean Dortan inquired.

"If I did I would not be there," said the man.

"I want the French army," Jean Dortan explained.

"Your taste is unique," said the man.

"Can you help me to it?"

"I could more easily help you to hell, and I dare say you would not know the difference. Look you, my friend, you are lost. I also am lost. What more can a man want?"

Jean Dortan gazed down at him in earnest scrutiny. He appeared most comfortable with his fire and his straw, and a contemplative ass munching behind gave him something of a domestic air; but Jean Dortan was doubtful whether he could trust to a person so bizarre his invaluable General Bonaparte. General Bonaparte, who was cold, decided for himself. He spurred up into the firelight: "May a wet man claim an hour of your fire?" he cried.

"Give what you have, ask what you need. That is vagabonds' law," said the man, and made room for him by the fire. "My ass, being an ass, will not want to share his oats, but you're free of the rest."

Bonaparte came heavily to the ground and gave up his horse to Jean Dortan, and, shivering, crouched close to the fire. The man passed him a sausage and a flask. . . . "You are well found, sir," said Bonaparte, his blood something warmed.

"If all asses would carry food and drink and fire like my ass, they would not need bray so much," said the man.

"Meaning us asses?" said the literal Jean Dortan, who, having cared for the horses, was now standing over him.

The round, red face was turned to him a jolly smile. "Asses, good sir? Oh, you are more, you are soldiers."

"And what are you?" snapped Bonaparte.

"I am the perfect vagabond, General Bonaparte."

"You know me?"

"Does any man but General Bonaparte look so unhappy?"

Bonaparte stared at him keenly. "What right have you to be happy, master vagabond?"

"No man has the right to be anything else."

"When you have a chill in your marrow," said Jean Dortan, the practical man, "and nothing at all in your belly——"

"I am independent of marrow and belly," and the perfect vagabond, with a wave of his hand, brushed both away. "Well. You may eat, you may drink. There are yet two sausages and a pottle more. Shall I sing you a song or discourse of greatness and the causes of things?"

"In the name of the devil who are you, and of what country?" cried Bonaparte.

"My name is Giacomo Connell. My mother, poor soul, was a Roman. My father was wise enough to be an Irishman. So much for my blood, which unites happily the practical and the speculative fluids. I am of no country, but I know them all from Belgrade to Inishmore. I have never a home nor wife nor child, and thank God for all. There is no man, I believe on my soul, has such strength in him as I, and I rest content to be nothing to every man and everything to myself. That being bliss."

"So a pig might say if it spoke," Bonaparte sneered.

"Mark your intellect's confusion—no. For a pig is



destined to be something for its enemies, namely bacon. I, who do no harm alive and should do no good dead, am free of all swineherds, whether they call themselves emperors or peasants. God made Giacomo Connell for His own glory and the said Giacomo's pleasure. Piously I strive to fulfil His purpose. Now why in God's name did God make *Napoléon Bonaparte*?"

Bonaparte looked at him with contempt. "For work, sirrah," he snapped.

"Oh, I cry you pardon. I know one way to glorify God—it is to be happy. When I am glad in the wayward light of a moon rainbow across the snow—when I see the spring dawn break pale gold on the breath of the limes—when the sea is still as the floor of heaven, purple and blue and emerald under the black cliffs of Inishmore—then I know myself of one mind with God, because the splendours of His delight are mine. What are your joys, *Napoléon Bonaparte*?"

"I do not gape at the world, sirrah, I make it anew."

"I suppose you know no better," said Giacomo Connell with a sigh. "What is your quarrel with the world as it is? My friend, to yourself no doubt you look a hero. To the sane you look like a weevil. You must needs be boring and boring into good, wholesome stuff till you spoil it. Not even yourself gets any good of it. Whoever saw a weevil look gay?"

Bonaparte stood up. "For your fire and your food I thank you, but your tongue pays for all."

"Ah, you'll have lost your taste for homely joys. Now I'm as witty as a spring afternoon. Well, sit down, Bonaparte. You'll not get anywhere but beside yourself while the air is like wet wool. And if you've no taste for reason, I'll try you with rhyme."

He reached for his guitar and began to sing in a humorous wail:

*Rusticus dum nimium  
Gravat suum asinum  
Vidit semimortuum,  
La sol fa  
Vidit semimortuum  
La sol fa mi re ut.*

Bonaparte, after staring through the fog awhile, dropped down again with a mutter of disgust. Jean Dortan had never moved. There is a good deal of this song of the ass's last will and testament, and Giacomo Connell chanted it well and faithfully. It might have been better liked if any one but himself had understood it. Bonaparte, who was steaming close against the fire, broke it with inarticulate sounds of impatience, Jean Dortan with snores.

The white wood ash fluttered about the fire, flames swayed against Jean Dortan's unconscious feet. The air was moving. Whorls of fog came grey into the firelight, and rolled on into black glimmering dark. Sharper breath came to the nostrils. Clean shadows fell beyond the fire. Bonaparte started up with a cry, and stirred Jean Dortan with his foot.

Jean Dortan arose grunting, looked at Bonaparte, looked at the dark. "Which way?" he inquired.

"All roads lead to heaven," said Giacomo Connell, "but perhaps you do not want to go there."

Bonaparte was searching vainly for stars in a sky canopied with inky cloud. He turned at last to Giacomo: "Which way lies Ronco?"

“Southward by three east. And where is southward? There—” he pointed up wind.

Jean Dortan went off for the horses. Bonaparte strode up and down beating his whip on his boot, and Giacomo Connell looked at him curiously. “I wonder,” said Giacomo. Bonaparte checked to look at him, but as Giacomo was some time in wondering anything articulate, resumed his fretful march. “I wonder if you ever let your mind stay still and think of itself.” Bonaparte gazed at him a moment in contemptuous astonishment. “I am purely sorry for you,” Giacomo assured him.

Jean Dortan was coming with the horses saddled. But there was the sound of more horses than his on the air. Bonaparte and Jean Dortan listened anxiously, ears to the wind. “It comes across wind,” said Giacomo carelessly. “From eastward.”

“From eastward?” Bonaparte repeated. “Austrians!” and he hurried to his horse. “The Austrians at Zevio!”

“Your soul is only little, after all,” Giacomo remarked. “What harm will they do you? Since you are only a murderer by wholesale they will not kill you if they take you. And the greatest opportunity of greatness is in prison. Pause and consider. Show the might of your soul by glorifying God in a dungeon. Then I will believe in you.” But Bonaparte was already in the saddle and turning westward. “Unless you can fly,” said Giacomo placidly, “I think you will not get across the marsh that way. Moreover, as I judge by the nearing sound, the Austrians have seen our fire, and will be upon you in three minutes.” Jean Dortan, who had been tightening his girths, jumped at the fire,

and began to trample on it; but Giacomo rose up, and thrust him away. "Fool, O fool! Leave the fire and remove yourself. Follow: who follows Giacomo?" He vaulted on his bare-backed ass and struck away south.

Bonaparte, who had come in ten yards upon a stream impassable, halted one moment irresolute, then spurred after him. And the faithful Jean Dortan followed. There was, in fact, no choice. They knew no way by which it was safe to make so much as a trot. Giacomo at least was achieving that. . . . After the lean grey shape they went, and he looked in the gloom like a ghost on the ghost of an ass. The beast bore him well, and Giacomo never faltered, twisting and turning handily between deep channels and patches of oozing, watery land, yet making steadily southward. Through clear darkness they went with a live wind about them . . . and the wind was fraught with sound . . . all the marsh moved with white horsemen. . . . Often their winding way brought them near enough to hear gruff German oaths; but they had gone a mile or two before, in the medley of movement and sound, they were marked down.

"Who goes?" It was a Hungarian talking German. "On the track to Ronco, who goes?"

"Why, then, we'll be off it," Giacomo muttered, and turned his ass westward and splashed through sodden turf. But they had been seen. A carbine rattled away down wind. Yelling, a troop thudded after them. Giacomo's ass was no beast for a gallop.

Bonaparte ranged up alongside him: "On, man, on, in the name of God, get on!" he muttered. Giacomo laughed. "Which road is it, then?" cried Bonaparte, desperate.

“Who gets to the end will know,” said Giacomo calmly, and began to sing his song:

*Rusticus dum nimium  
Gravat suum asinum  
Vidit semimortuum  
La sol fa.*

The clash and boom of the Magyar horsemen were closer each moment. Challenge and threat roared in their ears. But the amiable Giacomo did not urge his ass faster the least, and to Bonaparte's stream of hoarse oaths he replied only with the unconsoling song:

*Si te scissem asine  
Moriturum propere  
Involvissem sindone  
La sol fa.*

Now the Magyars were upon them. They could hear the scrape and the whistle of drawn swords. Jean Dortan had fallen behind. Jean Dortan, though more ashamed of the emotion, was almost as much concerned for his General as Bonaparte himself. Jean Dortan reined suddenly round and alone met the rush of the Magyars. He got one man on his swordpoint before they crashed on him body to body. Then he was hurled from the saddle, then his horse was dashed down, and down upon him went the first of the Austrians too, and there was wild chaos of fallen, plunging chargers. Pulling wide, the troopers behind won round and thundered on after Bonaparte. Bonaparte, wild with panic—after all, it would have been a grey ending to his

strength if the Austrians had taken him there—Bonaparte was thrusting on before Giacomo Connell, not caring whither he fled, so he had a chance to flee.

“If you go your own way you go to the devil,” cried Giacomo. “Follow, follow the ass!” He turned away to the south of west, and Bonaparte, with a wild glance back at the pursuit, wrenched his horse round to follow.

Giacomo was leaning forward over his ass’s nose. “Close, keep straight with his tail,” he cried back to Bonaparte, and checked his ass, and checked again.

The Magyars thundered on, whooping to their prey, a dozen abreast, till on a sudden their horses were caught deep as their hocks and a dozen went out of the saddle and came again with an ugly sound to the open bosom of the marsh. Giacomo was finding a bare bridle-track over the most perilous ground, a causeway Etruscan builders had made seventy generations before. Without one wavering glance behind Giacomo held on, eye and ear and nose intent upon the tufts of rushes and marsh mint and mallow and the tiny patches of red marl. Bonaparte turning in his saddle saw the foremost of the Magyars engulfed, saw their fellows check desperately and open out and try for firm ground on either side. But firm ground there was only upon that tiny broken causeway, and the Magyars could not find it. More than once Bonaparte’s charger, less sure-footed than the ass, slipped a leg down into the morass, and there was a check and a struggle; but always, in spite of his rider’s horrible horsemanship, the horse won the causeway again, and soon they were far away from danger. Giacomo Connell led on without a word till they struck the broad highroad from Verona to Legnano.

Then he reined round and faced Bonaparte. Bonaparte saluted him: "Sir, you have done me a service."

"What have you done with your friend?" said Giacomo Connell.

"My good Jean!" said Bonaparte with a laugh of some sadness. "He turned back to hold them in check. He saved us."

"I thought he was such a fool," said Giacomo Connell. "Well?"

"Well, my friend," said Bonaparte, "which is the road to Ronco?"

"It is not the way to your friend," said Giacomo Connell.

Bonaparte shrugged. "I have no right to think of my friend—I must think of my army, of France."

Giacomo laughed. "You never disappoint me," said he. "Go your ways. Go to Ronco. Go to the devil," and he pointed Bonaparte on.

Bonaparte went off at a gallop. He had some excuse. If the Austrians were in force about Zevio, the Austrians were moving on Mantua, the Austrians were down from the hills. The moment to strike had come. As for Jean Dortan—why, Jean Dortan had done his duty and was probably dead. It was not necessary to think any more about Jean Dortan.

The French army was in bivouac on the drier ground and the dykes about Ronco. Soon Bonaparte met a patrol searching for him, and riding in with them he found Berthier grunting profusely with agitation. Bonaparte slapped his shoulder, and with no more greeting bade him sit down by the firelight and take orders for the morrow. They were flung in curt sentences, they took few minutes, but they made Berthier

bite his nails and blink as he strode off. Bonaparte had his sodden boots hauled off, rolled himself in a dry cloak, and lay down by the fire with holsters for a pillow, and was asleep at once. There were hours of the long November night still to come.

Before dawn he was afoot again, and away to the outposts listening for any sound from north or east. All was still, still in the deep cold sleep of the last hours of night. . . . Slowly the dawn twilight came. Black earth and sky were pallid grey, and the watchfires lost their glow. Men moved, marshalled shadows, along the dykes. Before the late sun had risen Masséna was marching away north to fall on the Austrian flank.

All night long Giacomo Connell had been busy. When Bonaparte left him with his breathless ass, he turned and jogged leisurely along the highroad, past the chapel of San Carlo, till he had the marsh on the east of him. Then he tied his ass with a long halter to a cypress, and leaving that placid beast, who at once began to browse, he ventured forward to the Austrians afoot. Their white horsemen were flung wide. To the rear away by Zevio and far and far eastward spread a broad band of white. Giacomo went fearless, careless, chanting a doleful ditty.

Soon one of the swarm of horsemen bade him stand, and he stood politely still. "Have you found my ass?" he asked in German.

The question did not propitiate. He was reproved profanely, and bidden account for himself.

He was courageous. "My name is Giacomo Connell," said he, "and I have lost my ass. These abhorrent Frenchmen, who, having Bonaparte, surely need no ass more, have stolen mine. Therefore stay the first



ass you meet, without counting his legs, and commit him to me." The mention of Frenchmen and an ass made him a person of importance.

"Who are you with so much to say?" cried an officer as the troopers closed round him.

"I am a pedlar of joy."

"You'll talk sense if you're wise."

"Sense!" cried Giacomo. "I'm beside myself because I can't be beside my ass."

"By the Virgin, he's mad!" said some pious soul.

But one less devout took him by the collar: "Hark to me now, and have done with folly."

"Faith, it's plainly impossible," Giacomo protested.

His captor shook him: "Where were you when you saw these French?"

"I was here, or it may be there," said Giacomo with an air of pedantic accuracy. "That is to say there," he pointed vaguely through the dark, "peaceably passing the night by a fire of my own. You must know I'm on my way to Innsbruck (where my sister's husband has a cousin), and I've a full load of joy with me. Well, I was lost in the fog, so I made a fire, and my ass and I we set up our rest for the night. Then came these devils talking French, as of course the devil would. Two of them had horses, one had not. They asked where they were, and I told them they were lost and they stole my ass. So if they are not lost in this world they will be in the next. A fine ass he was. I called him Plato. I think no gentleman here knows so fine an ass."

"Which way did they go?" the Austrian roared.

"Oh, did you want to know that? There—there." Giacomo pointed truthfully toward Ronco. "I ran as

far as I could, but you know how fast an ass runs. After all an ass is wiser than a man, for he does not mind being an ass."

His philosophy was not heeded. The Austrian officers were all speaking at once.

"It is the same. It is they Quasdonowich's husars were chasing. They had an ass. What were they like, fellow? what were they like?"

"There was one," said Giacomo, very much at his leisure, "a little man with a big brain-pan. Little of soul but with a great brain: such, gentlemen, I take to be the nature of the devil. A sharp face, a sallow face, and nothing of a neck."

"It is he! It is the Bonaparte!" the Austrians cried. "And he fled to Ronco?"

"Taking, nefariously, my ass," said Giacomo.

"Oh, condemn your ass!" cried the man who held him, and flung him away. Gallopers were sped off on either flank with the news, and they moved on toward the highroad.

Giacomo was left to himself. "There is so little merit in being able to deceive mankind," he murmured plaintively. "That makes one love them. I wonder if there is much merit in being able to help them?" Pondering on the rewards of merit in this world and the next (which was his uncommon habit) Giacomo went on over the marsh to look for Jean Dortan.

He was well through the screen of horsemen now, and the sedate mass of the main army was far enough out of his track. He held his way unfaltering as a man used to walk by night. But it was some while before, winding among the channels, he came upon the ruin of Jean Dortan's sacrifice. The Magyar horsemen, before

they followed the advance, had done what they could for their comrades. Broken-limbed horses had been put beyond pain. Some of the wounded men had been borne away, some were rudely bandaged and propped up against the dead horses. They lay dazed and numb with the chill of the marsh. Giacomo came peering close into the wreck. He found Jean Dortan with his head in a stiff pool of blood, his legs pinned beneath a horse, lifeless. Giacomo put his hand to the heart and the pulse in the neck, his cheek to the bloody lips . . . he rose with a sigh of content. Then he sweated vastly dragging at the horse, till he had Jean Dortan free and resting comfortably against it. But Jean's head lolled on his shoulder and his limbs had many joints. Giacomo stripped the cloak from the largest of the Magyar dead and over Jean Dortan's blue coat put the Austrian white. Then he hoisted the big, limp, lifeless form on his back and made off. . . . He was a monstrous figure with his burden, and some roving horsemen spurred at him, but gave him God-speed when they heard he was taking a comrade to a leech and a church. His brow was dropping sweat upon his breast when he came to the tiny chapel of San Carlo of the Marsh and let fly a thundering kick at the door. From the unglazed window of the tiny cell beside a shorn head popped out. "My son, my son," the fat voice was anguished, "do no sacrilege!"

"I'll swear it's sacrilege to the image of God to keep a wounded man outside your door."

"Oh, alack! alack!" The monk flung wide the door of his cell. "*Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.* But how could I tell a wounded man would kick so? Come in, my son; come in, and give the glory to God."

Giacomo stalked in and let down his burden with a grunt on the priest's bed and wiped the stream off his brow. Jean Dortan lay as he was laid.

"Ah, St. Mary Magdalen," cried the priest, bending over him. "Ah, Mary Mother, of your grace for all poor souls!"

"Amen for myself," said Giacomo. "He—well, he'll not do ill in the next world, but we'll try to keep him in this."

"Ah, surely, surely," the fat friar was bustling with linen and water, and stirring the embers of his fire. "It were a sin else."

"There are poor souls enough have seen their last sunset," said Giacomo, beginning to peel the clothes off Jean Dortan, "and you'll have your chapel full of poor bodies before another."

"Say you so? Ah, *miseri, miserrimi!* God soften the hearts of men!"

"And stay the devil softening their brains," said Giacomo; and with that the two fell to work on Jean Dortan, and washed his wounds and bound them with linen and sweet oil, and poured wine and milk into him. The dawn was breaking when first he groaned. Giacomo went out to chop wood for splints, and as he worked in the silvery light heard a rattle of musketry away in the east. Bonaparte's day had begun. Pensive, Giacomo went back, and together—he had some practice and the priest some theory—they set Jean Dortan's legs. The pain of that woke him, and he opened dull eyes upon them and muttered, "My captain, my captain." There was something of mockery in Giacomo's smile.

So they fed Jean Dortan again, and he sighed

heavily and slept. Then they paused to feed themselves. While they ate the cannon roared from far. Giacomo arose. The fat priest looked at him timidly. "I go for more asses," said Giacomo.

When he was gone and the din of the battle grew heavy, the priest knelt and prayed for all life.

While the sky blanched from dark grey to pearl white, Masséna's division had sped away north. An hour later Augereau moved along the causeway through the marsh to Arcola. Masséna's scouts clashed on the flank of the Austrian army, and to a patter of musketry the sun rose dull yellow out of the yellow plain. Masséna thrust fiercely forward, hurled a brigade on the Austrian flank, and brought the whole army to a halt. At the same moment Augereau came down upon their rear.

It was well done, yet not well enough. Bonaparte had reckoned that the Austrians would be clear of the village of Arcola before Augereau was up with them. For once that lazy army had profit of its laziness. A brigade of Croats lingered stupidly in their quarters, and in their quarters Augereau caught them. It was the worse for him. The Croats, who would not hurry for their own general, would not hurry for the French. They let Augereau's skirmishers come into the village, and slew them there at their leisure. Augereau launched a regiment in column along the causeway, but from their mellow brick cottages the Croats riddled the French ranks and tore them asunder. Again and still again Augereau brought columns to the attack, but in the steady fire from the village the fiercest charge melted away. Augereau himself sprang from his horse and ran forward, rallying his men with cries and blows,

and snatched the standard of his best regiment and bade them follow him and the glory of France. Madly they surged forward, and on and on. But the Croats, not mad at all, let them come to a hundred yards and smote them again with a tempest of lead and beat them back in disorder, while Augereau raved in vain.

Bonaparte's plan was shattered: the surprise had failed. Alvintzy the Austrian had time to get his army in hand and form again. His vanguard turned and held Masséna in check while he brought back new brigades to support his stubborn Croats in Arcola.

Pallid, with eyes like lance-points and his great brow drawn, Bonaparte rode up to Augereau's broken battalions. Augereau was afoot still working like a sergeant to beat them into some order, and his officers were as mad as he.

"Soldiers!" Bonaparte's voice rang. "Soldiers of France! Soldiers of Liberty! It is I, Bonaparte, who ever leads you to victory. Fight now! Come, my children. For the honour of your mothers. Forward! Forward!"

Down he sprang, and thrust through to the front and led on down that way of death. Marmont was with him, and Muiron and Berthier. After him surged Augereau's men, still he kept in front. The Croats let them come close. Then, as the storm broke with a roar of flame, Muiron and Marmont sprang before Bonaparte, and Muiron was stricken and fell. Still Bonaparte was rushing on into the hail of death. Berthier strove to drag him back, and reeling in the blood and mire fell with him from the causeway into the marsh. The ranks behind saw him fall, and roaring with rage and grief dashed on and on. They went

down like corn before the scythe. Still a few veterans ran, staggering, screaming. But it could not be. They flung themselves down flat with the causeway, sobbing in rage.

Marmont dragged Bonaparte from the marsh, and Berthier. Bonaparte, dashing the mud from his eyes, gave one swift glance down the causeway. Those few of the foremost had come to their senses again, were biting their cartridges and opening a broken fire on the village. But for the rest, swathes of dead and a frightened rabble at the causeway end was all that the charge had won.

Bonaparte strode back, giving Marmont orders that sent him off at the run. When he came to the panic-stricken crowd, "What! You have done all that men can do. Why play the coward now? Courage, courage! We shall bivouac on the battlefield." And he mounted again and sat in the saddle among them. a still, strange form, all coated with the red mud of the marsh. He spoke no more, he asked no more of them. But with Bonaparte waiting there amongst them they could not think of flight, and Augereau and his officers hammered them into something of order.

Away south, along the dyke that chains the swift stream of the Alpone, something began to move, and slowly, slowly came nearer. It was a battery of field guns double horsed, with a company of pioneers tramping beside and digging and banking and shouldering the guns through the breaking ground. They worked to a place where the rock of the mountains broke through all the rich soft river soil. Then swiftly they unlimbered, there was a puff of white smoke, and a shot ricocheted from the causeway into Arcola. With the

next round they had the range, and working like madmen they brought swift ruin on the village. The brick walls bent and swayed and fell in rolling clouds of golden dust. Through it Augereau's men could see the white coats hurrying away. They gave a great hoarse yell, and with no word given dashed forward along the causeway over their dead.

Through the shattered smoking village they broke, driving the Croats before them, pursuers and pursued all one wild rabble. But on the higher ground beyond Arcola the Austrian brigades stood firm and smote comrade and foe with grapeshot and musketry. The French fell back, and amid the ruins of Arcola formed again. The battle was only begun. On the slope of the Alpine foothills the Austrians were strongly posted, and beneath the hills Bonaparte had only a scanty strip of firm ground. On either flank the rivers and the marsh shut him in. He had no room to manœuvre. All he did must needs be clear under the eyes of the enemy.

A long thunder away to northward, something of trouble on the Austrian right, told that Masséna was fighting hard. But he was miles away: he was not strong enough to help the main battle. Bonaparte brought up some guns, planted them as he could on the solid earth by the willow clumps in the marsh, across the causeway, in among the ruins of Arcola, and opened a furious fire on the Austrian lines. The Austrian gunners answered, and earth and air quivered with the din. Murat led a brigade of horsemen across the causeway, and the French guns were silent as he charged up the hill. Through the fire he charged and charged home, but the stubborn Austrian infantry



stood firm, and his horsemen fell back with many a saddle empty. Then the Austrian cavalry were loosed on him, but in their turn were hurled back. So again, with vain thunder of artillery and furious charges that broke and shattered vainly on the reef of bayonets, long hour after hour went by.

Behind the fight Bonaparte sat his horse, silent and still and grim, like a dead man in the saddle. Murat was doing his best. Murat was pouring out the lives of men, and the Austrians paid life for life. It remained to see whether Austrian spirit or French could longer endure the tragedy. With cold, keen eyes Bonaparte examined his men.

Not far away Giacomo Connell and his ass watched Bonaparte with wonder and something of pity and something of contempt, as a man might feel for a child at some stupid, nasty fault. Often he turned from Bonaparte to watch the desperate ranks and the grim, ghastly field of blood and horror, and grief moved strangely over his round red face.

The failing charges fell slower and feebler. On either side the steel-tipped ranks of infantry were unsteady. But still from marsh and hill the guns roared and the ranks were rent. Still the slaughter grew, and the torment. Still Bonaparte sat silent. He had done his part. This fight his men had to win for him, to win by the power of seeing comrades suffer.

With a queer nervous cry Giacomo kicked his heels into his ass and broke forward. "End it, devil, end it in God's name!" he muttered to himself, and he caught Bonaparte's arm. Bonaparte turned with a start, like a man waked from a dream. Giacomo and he stared full into each other's eyes, foe against foe. "If there

were a way over the marsh—south—by Alvaredo?" said Giacomo in a hoarse, strained voice.

Bonaparte's eyes lighted suddenly as his mouth moved. He swept a wide gesture round the battle. "So?" he said eagerly.

"So," said Giacomo; then, with an effort. "I—I could show you."

Bonaparte shouted for Marmont, his eyes agleam. Marmont was bidden take the Guides and follow Giacomo across the marsh and up the hills till he could come down on the Austrian left flank rear—three trumpet-blasts his signal.

"My general, I thank you," cried Marmont, laughing as he saluted.

But Giacomo lingered, intent on Bonaparte. "It will make an end?" he asked, his voice gruff and quavering.

"An end? A victory, a triumph," cried Bonaparte. "And you shall be paid like a prince." But Giacomo laughed.

So the Guides, the flower of the cavalry, the last reserve, moved away from the battle alongside the tawny, sluggish river, and at their head Giacomo on his ass rode beside Marmont.

Behind them Bonaparte was already covering the plain in a fog of feints. No soldier ever knew better how to use the pageantry of battle. He called Murat's weary cavalry away from the fight and massed them upon his left. Just beyond the range of the Austrian guns, but full within the Austrians' sight, they began to make complex evolutions that brought them out beyond the Austrian right. The Austrians saw the maze of parading horsemen, and watched earnestly as they were meant to watch, and thought as they were

meant to think, and strengthened their right mightily.

So that the thin line of the Guides threading a winding way across the marsh was unheeded. So that no one thought of them at all when they passed to firm ground and were lost in a green gorge. They came out of it above the Austrian left. Swiftly they formed, thrice their trumpeters pealed the charge, and they smashed down on the weakened line. When their trumpets spoke Murat swung all his horsemen round, away from the massed strength of the right, and charging obliquely took the left wing in front as Marmont came down on its flank and rear. The lean ranks broke before the shock and fled at last. All the army quavered. The strained wills were failing now.

Then Bonaparte, spurring forward, shouted: "Forward, Augereau, forward! They will not stand. Forward, my children: France, France!" Then the drums beat and the bugles pealed; and yelling, the French battalions fell into column and dashed on up the hill, a dark medley of red and blue and steel. The white Austrian army surged and swayed to and fro, while Murat's dark horsemen raged in the midst; and soon, before the bayonet charge got home, fell back and back slowly like a cloud at dawn.

It was no rout. Not even in retreat could the Austrians hurry. Those stolid brigades that had held Masséna at bay since dawn covered the retreat and could not be broken. But retreat they must. The day was won. All Lombardy lay at Bonaparte's feet.

On the swell of that hard-won hill Bonaparte saluted Marmont. "It was well done. The pursuit is yours. We are all fought out. Where is your leader?"

Marmont looked carelessly about him. "If he's not

here he may be nowhere. I lost him when we charged. Does he matter?"

Bonaparte shrugged one shoulder. "No, he matters nothing," said he.

On that grim battlefield the army went into bivouac. The wet chill of a November night came down to torture torturing wounds. And Giacomo Connell went from man to man serving as best he could. Long after the army had fallen asleep by its half-kindled fires his lantern moved, and the coldest hours had come before he was conquered and slept among the dead with his ass browsing about him.

Soon after dawn he was afoot again, and he made a meal from a dead man's haversack, and he and his ass bore away a poor wretch with a grisly wound in his chest to the priest of San Carlo. The fat priest held up his hands in horror. "Ah, pitiful! Ah, unhappy! Oh, that men should scorn the work of God! Come in, poor soul, come in, and San Carlo stand by me and thee." He then, puffing to help Giacomo with the burden, "So. And so. Here is clean straw at the least. 'And thou—" he turned to Giacomo. "Blessed art thou, my son, who dost give me men to help."

"Faith, I am man enough to need blessing, father," said Giacomo. "And him—what of him I brought you yesterday?"

"He sleeps like a child," said the priest, and pointed out on his pillow the very peaceful face of Jean Dortan. "When he wakes he babbles of his general. What does a monk know of generals?" I bid him sleep again."

"I wonder," said Giacomo, half to himself; and then he went off to the battlefield for another burden. So

he and his ass plied to and fro till the cell and the little chapel had no room for more, and the priest assured him that he was doing the work of God. "Is it the work of God to clear up the messes of men?" Giacomo grumbled. His nerves were all raw. "My father, I am full of good works, and I know nothing that makes a man so irritable."

"Your heart is much wrought, my son," said the priest patiently.

"My heart was always fool enough to care for other people beside me," Giacomo grumbled. Then, with a fierce light in his eyes, he turned on the priest. "Why, in the name of God, should I heal these fools' wounds?"

"God does," said the priest. "Would you not be like Him?"

"I have not the strength, I suppose," Giacomo muttered, and turned away to the men on the straw. While he tended them Jean Dortan woke himself, crying, "My captain, my captain!" and Giacomo, with some impatient oath, turned to him. "What is the use of him, your captain?" he said with a sneer.

Jean Dortan stared and recognised the round red face. "My captain, is he safe?"

Giacomo laughed. "He took care of that." Jean Dortan dropped back content on his bolster. Combatant feelings worked in Giacomo's face as he watched.

"Where am I?" said Jean Dortan at last.

"You are safe too," said Giacomo.

Jean Dortan made a quaint gurgling sound like a child's laugh. "My captain," he murmured to himself, smiling. "There is no one like my captain." Giacomo was near exploding at him, but checked and turned away with darkening brow.

In the days that followed, the priest and he were surgeon and nurse and cook, and when he could not get what he wanted from the French commissaries, Giacomo was thief as well. Between the two of them the most of their patients throve till they began to chatter, and some would call for mother or comrade, but Jean Dortan always for Bonaparte.

"Oh, he is well enough, your little general," Giacomo would assure him. "What do you want with him?"

"He will want me," said Jean Dortan. Giacomo laughed.

Bonaparte had his army resting in the villages all round. The campaign was fought and won. When the month was running out, and some of his wounded were buried and some on their legs again, and Jean Dortan could hardly be held from trying his, Giacomo went out to find Bonaparte.

Bonaparte was at his ease in Alvaredo, and Giacomo had to wait till he chose to get out of one of his hot scented baths. Then, giving audience in a bed-gown, "What, my friend the ass!" said Bonaparte. "So you would not die till you were paid?"

"You always raise my opinion of mankind," said Giacomo. "Who makes me humble is the man fool enough to be a friend of yours."

There was silence a while, and Bonaparte searched him with keen, questioning eyes, but Giacomo did not explain. "If you have found Jean Dortan alive, you shall have your own price," said Bonaparte.

Giacomo laughed. "I think well enough of myself to want no more than myself, Bonaparte. But as for your Jean Dortan (God help him), come and see. I think he has something to tell you."

Bonaparte started up. "If this is true, my friend, you shall know what it is to serve Bonaparte."

"I do," said Giacomo, and laughed.

So you see Bonaparte striding hastily into the cell by the chapel of San Carlo, and the wounded men starting up from their straw to salute him and cry his name. But he was for Jean Dortan's side.

"Good day, my captain," said Jean Dortan, smiles all over his big face.

"My big Jean," said Bonaparte with some affection, and gripped the wasted shoulder.

Giacomo crossed over and stood behind Jean Dortan, looking down at Bonaparte with a saturnine smile.

"So you have conquered again, my captain?" said Jean Dortan. "I wish I had been there."

"You had done better," said Bonaparte. "It is a useful thick head of yours this," and he pinched Jean Dortan's ear.

"Tell me about the battle, my captain," said Jean Dortan; and Bonaparte told him a thrilling, a gorgeous tale, strengthened with some truth. The wounded men in the straw stirred, and cried out in delight. They found their own deeds more glorious by far than they had guessed. . . . But Giacomo continued to smile. . . .

"Eh, you are great," said Jean Dortan, drawing in his breath, and his eyes worshipped Bonaparte. "And yet you found time to remember the little Jean Dortan, eh, my captain?"

"If it had not been for that Jean Dortan I should be in an Austrian prison," said Bonaparte, smiling.

"You would have found a way," said Jean Dortan calmly; "you found a way to save me."

And Giacomo laughed.

Bonaparte looked up quickly, and met intent, scornful, questioning eyes. He understood. Giacomo had set a trap for him. . . . He was to tell the truth, to confess weakness, to diminish his glory. . . . Giacomo had made a mistake. Bonaparte's eyes flamed to give him challenge.

"Ah, my captain, it is good to follow you," said Jean Dortan. "You care for us all."

"So much," said Giacomo. "More than he can tell you, I think, eh, Bonaparte?" Bonaparte's eyes still met his, dauntless. Giacomo laughed and turned away, and went out. Bonaparte looked after him uneasily, and, as soon as he could free himself of Jean Dortan, followed. Twilight was falling, vapour gathering over the marsh. He found Giacomo saddling his ass. Giacomo showed no interest in him at all.

"Berthier shall pay you two thousand francs, my friend," said Bonaparte.

Giacomo straightened his back. "I have set your soul against mine," said he. "Look at it, Bonaparte." Then he strapped behind his saddle a little bundle of clothes and a net of fodder and fuel, and mounted.

"Where are you bound, fool?" cried Bonaparte angrily.

Giacomo turned in the saddle. "Where are you bound?" said he. "Who gets to the end will know." And he was lost in the silvery mist.



## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW A WOMAN PLAYED WITH HIM

GENERAL BONAPARTE was displeased with Venice. She did not admire him. She wished to be neither for him nor against him, to stand neuter between him and Austria. And her fame was an offence. In his mission to make the world anew he hated old-world glory. Also, she was worth plundering. He was minded to make an end of Venice. A pretext was required. He had never any difficulty about that.

There was one Salvatori, an infamous person, politician, and rogue of repute, whom Marmont had caught raising a riot in Brescia, and proposed to hang. Bonaparte saw use for him alive. Salvatori was brought to headquarters, to the presence of Bonaparte. His hands were bound, his clothes savoured of the prison, his face had the dirt and beard of three days, but he leered amiably.

“Will the gallows come next, Bonaparte?” said he. “It’s only hell that’s worse than looking at you.”

The cold light of Bonaparte’s pitiless eyes cut through him. “There are foul beasts that serve us by devouring filth. I have some for you, Salvatori.”

Salvatori shrugged. “I knew you were as foul as myself. And you are twice damned, for you have the strength to go straight.”

“It will be inconvenient”—Bonaparte leant back in his chair—“but I think I will flog you first. Berthier, see to it!”

Berthier grinned. Plainly he thought the conclusion satisfactory, and he scribbled an order while Bonaparte polished his finger-nails and looked over them at Salvatori. The order was set for Bonaparte to sign.

Salvatori's bloated face had been moving queerly. His bravado came down with a crash. "Oh yes, I am a coward," he said, in a harsh, shrill voice; "you know that, damn you! I'll be civil to you. What! you wouldn't be hard on a man for a smart answer. Why, you're a wit yourself."

Bonaparte finished his signature, then, with the sand-box in his hand, paused. "Do not fawn!—do not swagger!" he said coldly. "It would take so little to persuade me to kill you."

Salvatori gulped. "Pardon!" he muttered—"pardon!" and bowed low. Bonaparte made a gesture of disgust. Salvatori flushed through his dirt. "Well, what's the filth I have to eat?" he growled, and his bloodshot eyes were unsteady.

"The Council of Venice," said Bonaparte. "A proclamation in the name of the Council of Venice must be published through Venetia, exhorting the people to rise and murder the French army."

"Oh! A forgery."

"You have practice," Bonaparte sneered. "You are to write this: you are to publish it widely. I will give you life and a thousand ducats."

Salvatori leered. "The Council of Venice urging the people to massacre the French? I see the game. You want——"

"You will be wise to see nothing but what you have to do," said Bonaparte. "You are possibly fool enough to think of betraying my plans to Venice."

Remember that you are too filthy to be believed. That is why I use you." Salvatori muttered something and shifted uneasily. "And if you play me false I shall arrange for your death," said Bonaparte quietly.

Salvatori looked up a moment—it may be that he had a wild impulse to choose death. Not because the task was too base for him—he had worse than that on his soul—but to be free of Bonaparte. Then, with a sneering laugh at himself, he looked away. "I know who butters my onions," said he. "I'll do it, General. Why, I've my own quarrel with Venice. Curst oligarchs! I'll make them a proclamation!"

"I shall require to see it," said Bonaparte, and made a sign to Berthier.

So the affair of the proclamation was arranged. It was to be the destruction of Venice. Venice urging the destruction of the French army! What crime more infamous? What could call more loudly for the vengeance of war?

Salvatori went about his business earnestly. I think he had a pleasure in villainy for its own sake. He wrote a most inspiring proclamation, not without the tricks and turns—he was an expert in forgery—proper to the style of the new doge of Venice. The French were brigands, vampires, ministers of torment, nor wife nor wealth was safe from them: every true man of Venetia must rise and strike, and the land be washed in French blood. And the like eloquence. He published it widely in Brescia and Bergamo and Verona. He spread a rumour that the French were for suppressing it, and made the people wild for a glimpse. He earned his thousand ducats thoroughly. The devil had a very faithful servant in Salvatori.

But conceive the agitation of the senators of Venice when they found such inflaming rhetoric poured out as theirs. That the French were brigands they heartily agreed, but while the French were at their gates they had been careful not to say it. As for calling on the people to massacre, they knew their weakness too well. They had no wish to bring Bonaparte down on them. The new doge, Lodovico Manin, gave out hastily that the fine proclamation was a forgery. The Council sent an embassy to Bonaparte to assure him that it was the work of their enemies, to convince him how keenly Venice loved him.

It was close upon Eastertide when that embassy began its gorgeous journey. Venice was great no longer, but her splendour was left. Biagio Valieri was one, and Lazaro Giuliani, and Lorenzo Morsini, the orator, who took his wife with him. He had a devotion for her that amused Venice. Soon they saw that they were much needed. The good folks of Venetia were raging furiously. No man, peasant or burgher, loved the French soldier, who admitted no property but his own. They were ready fuel for Salvatori's lies to fire. The ambassadors, torn between the need of getting to Bonaparte speedily, and the need of quenching passions on their way, vacillated and lost time. Before their eyes the flame broke out in Verona.

There was a French detachment quartered there which had been something more insolent in its plundering than the common. On Easter Monday a sergeant of grenadiers, as he strutted the streets, lustful and greedy, saw some comely slip of a girl with jewels at her throat. He forced a kiss or two on her, and tore her jewels away. The girl screamed fiercely, and to

the first man who ran up told a tale of outrage blacker than the truth. They fell upon the grenadier, and when his comrades came to help him, beat them too, and drove them through the streets, and all Verona yelling Salvatori's wild lies joined in the hunt. Then, mad at the taste of blood, the mob beset the hospital and dragged dying men from their beds for the joy of killing them. In an hour every Frenchman who had not the luck to be within the citadel was battered and torn to death. You imagine the satisfaction of Salvatori.

But the Venetian ambassadors were not gratified. They had tried to stay the frenzy, but the mob only paraded dripping heads before them, and cheered them for jolly hypocrites.

Comfortable tidings of it all went before them to Bonaparte in his camp by Mantua. In fact he cannot have been much surprised. Doubtless he had hoped to carry the lie through without such ghastly aid, but the risk was plain. He was certainly not much distressed. He could always throw lives away easily for an end. But he received the Venetians with fierce, righteous wrath.

They were kept waiting an hour outside his tent, while orderlies jostled them. When they were admitted, Bonaparte made no answer to their salutes. He sat glowering at them with drawn brow. Biagio Valieri began with courtly compliments.

"You come from Venice?" said Bonaparte sharply.

"In our poor persons we represent so great a state."

"Your state has the insolence to come to me dripping with French blood?"

"We are here to explain," said Biagio suavely, "that

Venice has had no part in any blow at France. Venice——”

“Will you lie to my face?” Bonaparte thundered. “How does Verona keep Eastertide? Here are my men beaten to death—ay, sick men dragged from their beds to butchery, by the orders of Venice. Yourselves were there to watch and guide the massacre. And you tell me Venice had no part in it! Hypocrisy of hell”——so he lashed himself into a rage.

“Sir”——Lorenzo Morsini, the orator, took up the tale——“sir, that the Veronese were so enraged as to commit this slaughter we grieve no less than you. But Venice is guiltless of the deed as yourself. Our honourable state——”

“Guiltless? Am I a child, an idiot? It is well for you you wear the clothes of ambassadors. Else you were hanged in a row above the gate of Verona. As your Council shall hang, by the Republic! As your Council shall hang! Listen, rogues!” He roared at them the lurid phrases of Salvatori’s proclamation. “Is not that a call to murder? Is it not in the style of your doge? Is it not under the order of your Council? Ah, Venice shall pay for it dearly!” He beat upon the table with his fist. The veins were purple in his livid face.

“The proclamation,” said Lorenzo Morsini, “is nothing but a lie.”

“Oh, your insolence is too much!” cried Bonaparte.

“The lie of an insolent, infamous forger seeking to embroil Venice with France. Nay, I beseech you, sir, to hear me——”

“Hear? Have I not heard accursed impudence enough? I have done with you. You have shed French

blood. If you could cover Venetia with gold it would not atone. The Lion of St. Mark must lick the dust. The day of Venice is done."

"You are in the wrong," cried Lorenzo Morsini, starting forward, while his companions muttered together. "You wrong yourself to judge so madly. This proclamation is forged to bring on you the shame of crushing Venice—by our foes and yours, who yearn for your dishonour."

"Fool! fool!"—Bonaparte gave a harsh, cruel laugh—"have you no better lie? Tell me I forged it myself, then. Tell me I slew my own men."

"Even that would be more like truth than that Venice should plan massacre," cried Lorenzo Morsini.

"Ah, this passes all!" Bonaparte roared, starting up. "Have them out, Berthier. Out! out! Back to your Venice. Venice is doomed."

And the gorgeous embassy was thrust out of the tent and hustled away with ignominy.

They went back to Mantua as unhappy as men of no considerable soul can be—save Lorenzo Morsini. He was only an orator, but he knew how to love his country. The others were saying that it was very sad, and probably the taxes would be heavy under French governance. Morsini rode apart, and saw the pageant of the ages, Venice, bearing the burden of Christendom, and her suffering and her glory.

Back at their lodging in Mantua his companions bade him come and talk in council with them, but he brushed them aside, and went to be alone with himself and dreams. . . . In a while there came to him his wife, Dionea. He was sitting bent, his over-handsome dark head in the grip of one hand, one hand working

anxiously with nothing. He did not hear the rustle of her dress, and she knelt by him and put her cool hand on his. Wild eyes turned to her.

"It is true, then?" she said.

Morsini gazed down at her. She was of rich womanhood, and passion woke in her eyes as he looked. She flung her arms about him. "He means war. He means to crush us. There is no way," he said. Then, as she clung the closer, and the flame gleamed in her eyes, "Oh, it is an infamy!" he cried. "It is to violate the foster-mother of Christendom." Even to his own heart he was an orator.

"But you—you worked on him?" Dionea cried, throbbing to his phrase. "You spoke for Venice? What answer had he to you?"

"He would not hear," said Morsini. "Oh, he is mad with rage. He is the very spirit of blood and rapine. 'The Lion of St. Mark must lick the dust,' he yelled." . . . Then Dionea's arm was caught in a fierce grip. "Ay! he gives the doom of Venice, this Corsican bandit, this scum of a revolution. Name of God! this is shame indeed!" Dionea rose from her knees: she thrust back the tawny golden hair from her brow and stood panting a little, looking far away. "We—we can only die, and no help for Venice," Morsini groaned. . . .

"If he—if he should die?" said Dionea, very low. . . . Morsini's hands clenched, he looked up at her, his lips parted. . . . "It would be just," she muttered, her eyes intent aflame at him—"it would be just."

Morsini started up with a cry. Dionea and he stood close. A strange shadow of fear crossed her face. "What is it, then?" he whispered eagerly.



Dionea brushed something from her eyes. "Nothing. Nothing at all. . . . Lorenzo, I could go to him——"

"You?" cried Morsini. "Name of God, no! It is a man's deed."

She shuddered, gave a queer, uneasy laugh. "Oh, not that! I did not mean that. I could not, I think."

"No!" cried Morsini. "It is for a man. For a man the honour of the sacrifice. I will go and ask audience again. And my dagger shall give him audience. I will be the Harmodius, the Scaevola of Venice." She flung her arms round him, and clung to him passionately, trying to speak while tears held her eyes and her voice. But Morsini gave a bitter laugh. "Bah! what use? I am a babbler. He has his guards, his army all about him. I——"

"But it would help, it would serve Venice?" Dionea cried, breathless and pale.

"Serve?" Morsini laughed. "It would save her. It would smite the French with the palsy. The Austrians would fall on them again. Or at least—at least Venice would have struck down her foe. . . . Ah, but it is all words—words. We cannot help."

Dionea shook her head. Her lips moved silently. "There is a way," she said, in a strained voice.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bonaparte began to gather his troops for a blow at Venice. The Venetian ambassadors began their dolorous journey home. But one of them lingered at the first stage out of Mantua, and there vanished.

A night after Bonaparte had a strange guest. It was after dusk that he came back to his tent with Berthier and saw a dark form lurking. Into the lantern-light rose a woman dim in the shroud of her cloak.

But the white splendour of her face, her neck, and the glory of her hair were given him. Bonaparte made a quick stride forward, and she smiled at him. Her lips were vivid and full.

“Name of a little grey dog!” That helpful saying came from Berthier.

Bonaparte scanned the woman. “Who are you, breaking the laws of war and modesty?”

A dainty stain of blood warmed her cheek. “All’s fair for me,” she said, and her laugh rippled clear.

“That is an offer of battle,” said Bonaparte. He smiled and showed his teeth, and his eyes were bright.

She laughed again, and then, as Bonaparte came closer, pointed the finger at Berthier—the honest Berthier standing agape, the very spirit of uncouthness.

“My dear Berthier,” said Bonaparte, “you are too witty. It makes you at times a bore.” Berthier still lingered, gaping. Bonaparte motioned him out, and with leaden feet he went. “Pray forgive the gentleman’s emotions,” said Bonaparte, turning to his guest. “He is an excellent husband. Do you know what they are like?”

“I know all the follies of men.” Her voice was low and calm.

“And of what man are you the folly?”

Again he saw that vivid smile. “Are you afraid of me?” she said, and she moved the dark cloud of her cloak and made clear the full womanhood of her and the white grace of her arm. In a moment all was shrouded again.

“It is you have reason to fear me,” said Bonaparte. She laughed. “I know nothing of fear.”

Bonaparte gave a grim, ugly smile, but she sat herself down again, and rested her round chin on her hand to study him. Through the lantern-light he saw her eyes dark and like velvet, the delicate charm of her face. But her placidity was no compliment.

"You should have judged me before you came," he said, advancing.

"Perhaps I did," she said, calm still under the greed of his eyes. He made to lift her cloak away. "Oh yes, I did," she said, with a short, mocking laugh. She held the cloak close about her. "I thank you, I am at my ease as I am."

"When you have gone so far, modesty is a *bêtise*," Bonaparte sneered.

She made no struggle of coquetry, but she held the cloak still, and met him with grave eyes. "Yes, you are only an animal," she said coldly.

Bonaparte let his hand fall. "What else should you want?" he sneered.

"For the man who thinks so of a woman"—she spread out her hands—"God have mercy upon him!"

Bonaparte stood over her with drawn brow. "You'll agree that you came in the flesh," said he.

"Is that a reason I should not look for your soul?"

"Name of God!" cried Bonaparte. "Are you a religious?" and wonder grew in his eyes.

She gave a strange enigma of a smile. "Oh, I have a religion!" she said. "Have you?"

"Who are you?" he thundered. "What are you? What is your work with me?"

She watched him with calm, mocking eyes. It was a moment before she troubled to speak. "Is it so hard to think a woman might want to know you and your

mind and your soul? I am Giulia Nerli, a widow of Florence. The world told me Bonaparte was a hero, a god. I came to find what this god was like."

"And you find him?" said Bonaparte, intent upon her upturned face.

"I find him"—she lingered over the words—"of clay."

"Women turn all they touch to clay."

She laughed. "You must believe nothing, you know so little. Tell me, do you believe in anything?"

"I believe in Bonaparte," said he.

"The laughable, lonely creed," she murmured, with a laugh in her voice and her eyes. "Is it comfortable?" and she let her cloak fall back to arrest a straying curl. Her arm lay white against the dark gold crown of her hair. She gazed up at him mocking, proud in the mystery and the royalty of womanhood.

"I will convert you," he said, and his voice was low and hurried.

She lay back, her bare arms crossed in her lap. Her eyes were very dark, her face all white. Then the full, crimson lips parted in a strange smile. "I am armoured," she said. "I believe in myself."

"Bah! The woman who believes in herself has never done her duty." A queer, contemptuous laugh broke from her. He caught her arm, and, bending, looked close into the dark eyes and down over all the charm of her. Her bosom rose fast. She tried to move her arm, but he grasped it closer. "I'll tell you what Bonaparte is like." He was flushed, and the words heavy with passion. His eyes flamed, and she bent her head from them.

"My arm!"—she gasped—"my arm!"

“It’s more than your arm you’ll give me.”

She started away from him, wrenched it from his hand, blood in her cheeks, eyes hot afire. He flung his arm over her shoulder, and, bending close, “What is it women want in men? Power!—power!—power! There is such power in me——”

“Ay, to destroy!” she cried fiercely.

“Should I destroy you? Coward, my beautiful coward, I shall fulfil you. I shall give you life. You’ll know all joy you’ve had yet feeble and dwarf when I’ve held you in my arms. I shall make your heart leap”—he grasped her close—“ay, as it leaps now, and more and more. Body and soul athrob with life and joy.” He bent close, his great brow was flushed, and the blood burnt in his cheeks. The steel light of his eyes clove her will, and her lips were parted, her bosom quavering and her throat. She turned her head in little nervous movements from side to side, but still her eyes could not shun his. . . . Suddenly her cheeks were crimson, and with passionate strength she forced him away from her.

“Ah, it is too hard,” she muttered. “I cannot!—I cannot!” and she caught at her furrowed brow. There was wild hate in her eyes.

“It is too late,” cried Bonaparte, flinging his arm about her again. “I have you now.” And he held her while she strained away from him, strength against strength, will against will. . . . She trembled, she was suddenly white. He saw her in the grip of fear. Then he laughed. “Ay, you are mine, you are mine,” he said, grasping her closer. “Your soul is my subject.” He stood erect a moment looking down at her with the grim, greedy smile of conquest. She was quivering.

Her eyes were swollen with terror. . . . He crushed down upon her, his lips, his breast on hers. . . . She was cold and still to his kiss. . . . But then—then her arms fell about him and she clung to him. . . .

She struggled from his grasp and stood flushed dark, her hand to her bosom. Bonaparte laughed at her. She saw it, and cowered and muttered something to herself and hid her face. When she turned to him again she was smiling in a pitiful coquetry. "Oh—oh, you are rather terrible, you know." Bonaparte came to her and took her hands and was drawing her to him again. "Oh, no. No!" She thrust him away. She was in a frenzy of fear and shame now. "I must go."

"Have I not taught you you must stay?" said Bonaparte, smiling.

She turned upon him fiercely. "Oh, I am not so weak nor you so strong!" she cried.

"Is that true?" said Bonaparte, a mocking challenge in his eyes. "Is that true?"

She shrank from him. She brushed her hands across her eyes. "What is true?" she muttered. "Ah, God, what is true?" Then with a queer, gasping sob she put on the mask of coquetry again. "Oh, I can say good-bye. Can you?"

"It is not amusing," said Bonaparte coolly.

"Nevertheless—my—my god of clay—good-bye," said she, with a mock of a curtsy, and hurried to the door of the tent.

Bonaparte caught her. "Where are you going?"

"Oh!"—she gave a tremulous laugh—"oh! I thought it was I who was conquered. Am I so necessary to the great Bonaparte?"

“What does your soul say?” said Bonaparte, intent upon her.

She turned her head away. “I—I do not know,” she gasped. . . . Then, with a reckless laugh, “Well, you may come and see if you please.”

“Where?”

“I am lodged”—she blushed dark and stammered—  
“I am lodged at the inn of the Red Vine.”

“Then to-morrow about this time——”

“The god will arrive?” she said, and again her laugh rang reckless, and she wrenched herself away.

“Sergeant!” Bonaparte cried out to the dark, and a scurry of feet answered. “Take a file. Escort the lady to the inn of the Red Vine.”

Left alone, Bonaparte spread himself at his ease in a big chair, and contemplated his admirable fingernails and smiled. “She was amusing, the widow Giulia Nerli,” he remarked to himself, and took a great pinch of snuff in his fingers and smelt and threw it away. He reviewed the course of conquest. It amused him. He proposed to complete it. Her fear of him made it more piquant. . . . Her fear—the suspicious Corsican spirit stirred. . . . His desires were not to run him into any danger. The animal in him was fierce enough, but always under the power of the brain. . . .

He went out, and, coming into a mess-tent not far away, found Murat and Lannes, drinking against each other. Murat honoured him with a knowing leer. “I want Captain Savary,” said Bonaparte.

Murat, who had still some of the manners of the tavern, spat deliberately. “He gives me the nausea, your Captain Savary,” said he.

“That is why he is useful,” said Bonaparte. Some

one produced Captain Savary, a lank, sallow man of protuberant eyes, and Bonaparte beckoned him out to the night. "You will watch the inn of the Red Vine. I wish to know who is there and who goes there. It will be inconvenient—that the uniform should be seen."

Savary saluted, and shrank away into the dark.

Within the inn of the Red Vine Dionea Morsini knelt by her bed in an agony of confession and self-blame and shame and prayer. But she got no help of prayer, no ease. She had waked in herself wild forces of womanhood beyond her wit or will. And a medley of warring pain clashed in her. Now she felt the foulness of feigned passion, and her own purity was fierce against her—now she lived again that moment of ghastly joy when the passion was real and her body had cried to Bonaparte—now she loathed herself for false to plighted love and faith—now the new, loathsome passion gripped her again, and she writhed in horror of the death-trap she had made, and Bonaparte's doom—now she scourged her heart for pitying him. . . . If the soul's anguish can pay for the crime of folly, Dionea paid all her debt that night.

With the earliest dawn her husband hurried to the inn from his hiding at Roverbella. He could not but mark her dull, drawn cheeks, her clouded eyes. "Dionea!" He caught her to him. "Did he dare—is there——"

She gave a queer laugh as she freed herself. "No!—no! He dared no more than I . . . than I . . . asked. . . . Ah! Mary, Virgin Mother. . . ."

"Dionea!" He understood a little. He had his arm about her again. "Dionea!" he groaned, and held her close. With a cry of horror she struggled against him. But she saw his wonder and yielded herself. . . . Then



with a sob, "I cannot. I cannot," she put him away from her. "Not now! Not now!" she cried passionately. He stared at her, and she caught his hand. "Lorenzo! Always, always remember. It was for you, all for you."

His eyes gleamed, he smiled at her. But she turned away with a sob. "Oh, my love!" he cried, "for me, for Venice! It is done, then? He is coming? Dionea! How can I honour you enough, you and your sacrifice? To belie your own true soul! Oh, my love, my true love! I never knew your glory till now."

"You—you——" Dionea gasped, a queer, grim smile distorting her face. "Oh, well—he is coming."

"Victory! It is our victory," Morsini cried. "He is doomed. He shall fall. Ah, my love, the glory is yours!"

She shuddered; she turned from the light. "What will you do?" she asked, and her voice was unsteady.

"To-night when he comes I shall be here. Bid them bring him up. Have the room nearly dark. I shall be hiding—there—there. Make an excuse to leave him a moment—slip out and away. Giuseppe will have your horse in the stable yard. And the while, as soon as you are gone"—Lorenzo's eyes glittered, and the blood came in his cheeks—"my dagger shall talk with him, my dagger into his eye, his brain. An end of the Corsican, an end! And Venice is saved—our Venice!" He looked to her for some throb of his own delight; but she was pallid and still. "You see? Is it well?" he cried.

"Yes; it is well," she said slowly, and sank down on a chair, staring away through the morning sunlight.

Morsini looked at her with love and pity, and some-

thing like wonder. He knelt beside her. "My love, my life!" he said gently, and kissed her hand.

But she did not heed. Then suddenly she flung her arms about him and held him fiercely. "I love you!—I love you!" she cried, crushing her lips to his.

Morsini held her close. His eyes smiled at her. "I know," he said.

And at that she began to laugh. . . .

Now, Captain Savary had sent a message to Bonaparte that a man whom he took for one of the Venetians had visited the woman lodging at that inn. Bonaparte heard it with a flicker of changing light in his eyes. . . . He moved a little, . . . then his lips set in a smile, and he tapped his cheek. "Captain Savary will arrest that man and that woman and bring them to camp apart," he said to the messenger. And afterwards, "The widow Giulia Nerli is to be very amusing," said he.

He divined a plot. Something colder than desire was the woman's reason. His vanity was insulted and his brain. He did not allow himself emotion, but he proposed revenge.

So when Morsini came out from his wife to make his last plans for relays of horses, four of Savary's men followed him a hundred yards from the inn and neatly arrested him. You conceive the orator's helpless wrath and despair. They hurried him to Bonaparte, while Savary himself had the pleasure of arresting Dionea. She, after the first palsy of amazement, poured out a thousand wild questions. But Savary answered nothing at all, only licked his lips, as his way was when he was amused.

With four men to his guard Morsini was brought,

flushed, disorderly of face and dress, to the presence of Bonaparte. He glared at Bonaparte, and Bonaparte considered him with pitiless, humorous eyes. He was not often cruel without a purpose. But always a plan to trick him roused all the Corsican venom. . . . And his splendid brain fell to work devising torture. . . .

"The ambassador has made a mistake," said Bonaparte, smiling.

"You break the law of nations. You trample on the rights of sovereign states. Even among savages," cried Morsini, orator still, "an ambassador is sacred. This is an infamy, an outrage! Are you French lower than the savage?"

Bonaparte had been polishing his nails through all that eloquence. He looked up at the end. "We know how to deal with assassins, Signor Morsini," he said politely.

"I hurl back the name," cried Morsini; but there was something of fear in his eyes.

Bonaparte shrugged one shoulder, but he smiled still, and his voice was still very suave. "Pray, why have you not gone with your colleagues, Signor Morsini? Pray, what have you to do with the widow," he laughed gently—"the widow Giulia Nerli? I shall be glad to hear what you think of the widow Giulia. I found her"—he hesitated, with cruel eyes on Morsini's dark passion—"delicious." Morsini answered him only with glaring hate. "My dear Morsini, you thought too much of her constancy or too little of my charms. A little experience of me was enough to make her betray you to me."

"It is a lie!" Morsini thundered. "God in heaven, it is a lie!" and his voice broke on the words.

Bonaparte laughed. Now he guessed all. Now he saw his way to the extremity of torture. "Your wife"—Morsini was white, and trembled in the grasp of his guards—"your wife has been—wise. Having tried us both, Signor Morsini, she liked me the better." He let Morsini hear him laugh. "So from her lips—the lower lip is charmingly full—I have all your plans. She chose, in fact, to sacrifice you to me, rather than me to you. And so, my dear Signor Morsini, it is not I who shall die to-day, but you. And it is I, not you, who will be left possessing your adorable wife. She pleased me so much last night."

Morsini stood in his agony, his lips wet, his jaw moving, his eyes swollen. . . . God knows what he believed.

"A pretty toy. I think I shall not tire of her for a week or two," said Bonaparte, smiling.

And at that Morsini flung his guards from him, and hurled himself upon Bonaparte. The two went down together, Morsini above, his nails, his teeth at Bonaparte's throat.

His guards tried in vain to drag his desperate gripe away, and the two men rolled together in the dust, Morsini panting and snarling like a beast. "Strike, fools, strike!" Bonaparte gasped faintly . . . and one, waiting his chance, drove his bayonet through Morsini's throat. Morsini's hands relaxed as his blood welled out, and they tore him off, and he lay groaning.

Bonaparte scrambled to his feet. With a gesture he bade them look at Morsini's wound while he felt his own bruises and made his own disorder decent. . . . The corporal of the guard rose and looked at Bonaparte and saluted. "He is finished, my general," said



"I Hate Compliments with Thorns," Josephine pouted



he. Bonaparte, bending down, saw froth in the torrent of blood, and eyes dull already with the veil of death. Morsini's agony in this world was done. Bonaparte hurried to his wife.

Savary himself had her in the guardroom. The passion of the night, the terror of the morning, had clouded her loveliness, and her eyes were wild in despair. . . . She cowered when Bonaparte came in, but he smiled at her amiably, and motioned Savary out. Then he saluted her. "If the Signora Morsini had come to me in her own name I should have welcomed her—otherwise."

Her eyes were fixed in fear. "Forgive me!" she gasped faintly—"forgive me!"

Bonaparte laughed. "Oh! I have nothing now to forgive."

"Nothing to forgive?" she gasped.

"I have already taught your husband that he needs no forgiveness."

Blood surged over her pallid cheeks. "You know it all?"

"In fact you were not very subtle," said Bonaparte, and he laughed again. Then, while he watched her, his brow contracted. "It would have been simpler, safer, to stab me yourself. But if you had killed me, signora, would you"—his eyes were keen—"would you now be happier?"

She shuddered. She tried to look away from him, and could not. "Ah, you are terrible!" she muttered. Then she flung out her hands to him. "Let me go!—let me go!" she cried in a piteous voice.

Bonaparte came close, and she shrank from him. He took her chin in his hand, and tilted her miserable,

drawn face to the light. "Do I hold you so fast?" he said with a smile.

Her lips trembled, her bosom was heaving, her eyes filled with tears. She hid her face in her hands and sobbed.

"Well! I do not think your husband will rebuke us," said Bonaparte.

She looked up then, utter amazement numbing her misery.

"Come and see him," said Bonaparte with a smile.

She gave a terrible, wordless cry, then huddled together, hiding her face. "I cannot; Jesu help me, I cannot!"

"But my one desire is to unite you, to have the joy of restoring you to his love," said Bonaparte.

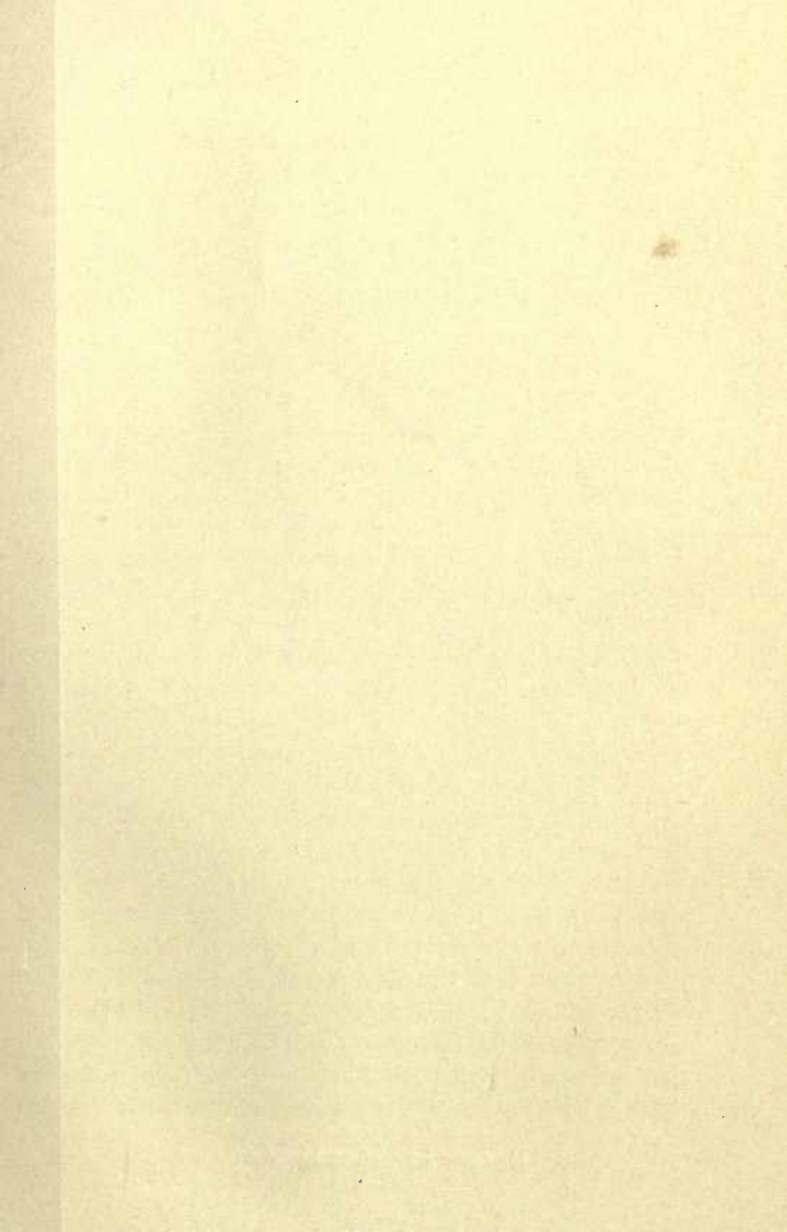
She sat moaning. "Come!" he cried, sharply tapping her shoulder—"come!" in a voice of command.

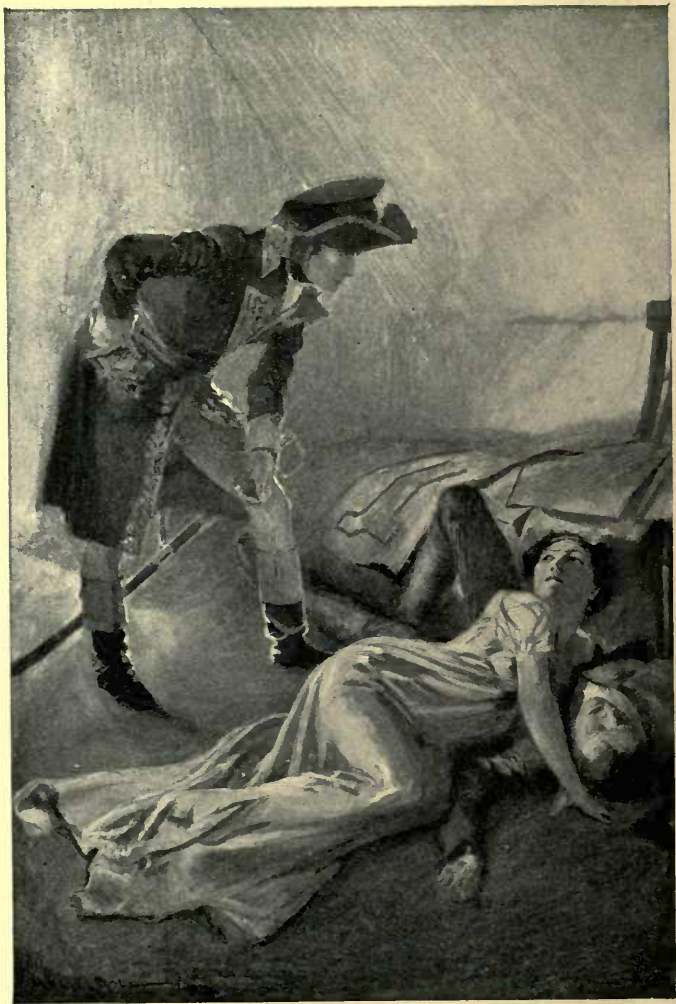
She gave a long, shuddering sob, and reeled to her feet, and stood gazing at him in utter wretchedness. He smiled at her, he opened his arms: "Now bid farewell to this passion," he said.

She swayed a moment, then with a wild laugh of shame she flung herself upon his breast and clung to him. So he held her, smiling placidly. . . . "And now we will come to your faithful husband," he said, . . . but he had to force her away from him.

Blind and dazed in her agony of shame, she went, dragging on Bonaparte's arm, through the camp. They came to his tent, he flung the canvas aside, she saw her husband prone in his blood. "He was so moved when I told him of your passion for me, that"—Bonaparte jerked a laugh at the dead—"that he gave up the flesh for the spirit, and left you for mine."







He came forward and bent over her

But she did not heed. . . . She stood very still, and gazed down at Morsini. . . . Slowly a strange, wild joy transformed her face. "Dead!" she muttered to herself—"dead!" and gave a little low laugh. . . . Then fiercely she tore herself from Bonaparte and stood erect, throbbing with life. One swift glance she gave round the tent, she saw the men of the guard, and, darting forward past Bonaparte's arm, she flung herself upon their bayonets.

There was a wild gust of oaths as too late the men tried to avoid her. Bosom and neck were stricken through. She started back, and reeled and fell down by her husband's side, and caught him in her arms, while her blood flowed upon his.

Bonaparte had missed his grip of her, had given some wrathful, wordless cry as she fell on the steel. Now he came forward and bent over her, his face grim and set. "Have I conquered?" he said. "What does your soul say now?"

But she laughed. "No . . . no . . . this is not yours," she gasped. . . . She turned, drew close to her husband, and so died.

Bonaparte stood gazing down at her, his great brow drawn, his eyes dark. . . .

That night he marched on Venice.

## CHAPTER IX

### HOW HE MET A JEW

To come by the true end of this chapter you must see Nelson send the *Goliath* into the shoal water at Aboukir; you must see Bonaparte in the great mosque at Cairo rocking himself this way and that to honour Mahomet. But it begins far enough from that.

It begins, to be precise, in a counting house of St. Mary Axe. Mr. Herrmann Stein, who was by birth a German and a Jew, by nature a money broker and looked all that, sat breathing heavily over his desk. From his shoe buckles to the velvet cap that covered his shiny head he was wholly neat, and his office neat as he. His large loose mass took so much space that there was no room for disorder. Mr. Herrmann Stein was engaged with a letter from M. Jacob Joseph, the Swiss Jew banker of Genoa. In English it would read something like this:

DEAR SIR,

Yours of the 9th July received and contents noted. Our house is willing to negotiate French Directory bonds at the price less three-eighths. Is your house in the market for Austrian bills with  $27\frac{1}{4}$  discount?

I take this occasion to submit for your consideration contract as follows: Mademoiselle Joseph, my daughter, being of nubile age (date of birth, Jan. 3, 1777), I desire to see her established. She will be ultimate heir of

my small property. In the interim I shall be prepared to make adequate settlement on her, parity for parity, as per subsequent agreement. Should you be inclined to enter into the affair for your son, I would suggest he should discuss the terms of the contract in person, when he might make the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Joseph.

With assurance of consideration,

Faithfully,

JOSEPH.

“So,” said Mr. Herrmann, and his goggle eyes became more defined. Then he chuckled wheezily, and then he struck a bell. A small alert clerk answered. “I was wanting Mr. David,” said Mr. Stein.

Mr. David came. He was less a Jew and far less a German than his father, a slim man of middle height and a pale face, pleasant enough to see but without anything to make the eye linger—quite acutely ordinary. His father gave him the letter and he read it quickly and looked up without a sign of amusement or disgust. His face was not designed for legible emotions.

But his father was still chuckling. “Dot old Joseph! He vas never having any sentiments. I shall ask him vat discount he give me on his daughter for negotiating her. . . Or tell him ve do not deal in lottery bonds, de firm of Stein and Stein. . . Have you ever seen her?”

“Yes,” said his son blandly. “She slapped my face.”

Mr. Stein chuckled with more vigour. “My dear, I often vant to do it myself. Dot is because you do not ever seem to vant anything. Vot vos it with Mademoiselle Eve? Did you not vant her either?”

“She was thirteen. I was polite,” said his son.

“And you will never grow out of it.” Mr. Stein shook

his head. "No, my dear, you would not be good for her. If she has spirit you would drive her mad."

"I am only a stimulant," said his son, and began to argue. His father and he enjoyed themselves in an earnest-minded battle. At the end of it David Stein, still calm, said to his perspiring parent, "Well, as you are getting so hot I shall go away to Genoa . . . Oh, do not be alarmed. I shall find nothing more permanent than amusement."

Then his father spoke to him in German. . . .

M. Jacob Joseph of Genoa, a sleek old widower, divided his affections between his money and his daughter. He liked to make one serve the other. Mademoiselle Eve, stately, deep-bosomed, with Juno's neck and brow, had charm. Her father used it in business. There came to Genoa in the summer of 1797 a certain M. de Bourrienne, the secretary of Bonaparte, who was zealous in making friends with the bankers. To know what Bourrienne wanted and what Bonaparte designed to do next was of moment. M. Jacob Joseph presented M. de Bourrienne to his daughter as a friend of honour. Mademoiselle consented to be kind. So the disaster was engendered. Bourrienne, who was neither modest nor cold, felt the allure of her body and mind. He would sit by the hour in her salon, his eyes wandering from her eyes to her ivory neck, and he set himself to talk his wittiest for her. Her father got little by it, for when delicately he hinted of Bonaparte and his future and his plans Bourrienne wrapped himself in a gorgeous mist of words. But he always looked well and he talked well, and Mademoiselle Eve, fascinating, was fascinated. If only M. de Bourrienne had had a little more restraint he might have won Mademoiselle Joseph. Then—why

then, the affair of Egypt would have ended in Bonaparte's triumph, Bonaparte been Emperor of the East, and the world worked out its fate by a different way. But you would hardly expect M. de Bourrienne to guess all that. M. Joseph of course had no kindness for Bourrienne. He relied on his daughter's skill as a decoy to keep M. de Bourrienne from being too serious. He was incapable of proposing to marry his daughter to any but a man of the same race, and at least as much money, as his own. He was a devoted father. But it did not occur to him that his daughter was still modestly innocent.

M. Joseph had made no progress with Bourrienne, Bourrienne had made a good deal with his daughter, when Bonaparte himself came to Genoa. Being heartily afraid of him, Genoa welcomed him with effusion. It was a grandiose entry. All the marble of the Via Roma was wreathed in the colours of France. From colonnade and piazza sounded all kinds of music. Gaudy crowds swarmed in the sunshine. Bonaparte's bronzed, ragged battalions came swinging along beneath storms of flowers, amid shrill cheers that grew and grew for Bonaparte—Bonaparte riding alone, a little lean, grey form, ill set on his white charger. The Genoese cast him a carpet of laurel boughs, they yelled at him "glorious liberator," in the hope that he might be, and fired at him volleys of kisses. Bonaparte touched his hat stiffly. Not a muscle moved in the gaunt bronze face. He stared right on.

In an upper chamber of the inn of the Piazza Deferrari, a man of modest clothes, modest form and modest features, a man distressingly negligible was smoking a pipe. The yells for the "liberator" drew him leisurely to the

window. Without enthusiasm he examined Bonaparte and smiled slightly. Then he returned to his chair, smoked his pipe out and by way of a bath went to bed. David Stein had an affection for calm. That night Bonaparte sat late reading the Koran.

On the next day David Stein allowed his ardour to take him to see the gentleman who wished to be his father-in-law. M. Jacob Joseph was rejoiced, and said so with the aid of a variety of languages. "It is heavenly! It is ordained!" so he concluded. "I will make an equal settlement of what you will." He held David Stein away from him at the full length of his fat arms. "My little girl and you! You will be a perfect match."

"I did think better of her than that," said David Stein sadly.

M. Joseph looked bewildered. "My son," said he, "you be sure that you can think no better of my daughter than she is."

"I shall not try," said David Stein.

M. Joseph frowned. "Ah, you have not seen her in some years. You think it is safe to be cold. But she is changed. But she is a woman."

"That," said David Stein, "is what I am afraid of."

M. Joseph made a gesture of impatience.

"You are no warmer than a toad. Come and see her." He went out and up a stair and flung open a door. David Stein beheld Mademoiselle Joseph clasped to the bosom of Bourrienne.

David Stein effaced himself behind a doorpost. M. Joseph said what he thought—it was not flattering—in a mixture of Italian, Armenian and Greek. Mademoiselle Joseph detached herself from Bourrienne



and turned to her father her back. It displayed profound emotion. But Bourrienne, who was extremely ruddy, strode to M. Joseph with a jolly laugh: "What, old gentleman!" he cried, and prodded the ribs of his desired father-in-law, "give me joy!"

"I will give you," said M. Joseph, with some enthusiasm, "the devil."

Bourrienne laughed again, but there was less mirth in his eyes.

"Take care, old gentleman," said he in a lower voice, "I am not a man to insult. Let me have two words with you. Come!" He took M. Joseph's arm and strode out with him. M. Joseph said more than two words as they went.

Mademoiselle turned with glowing, glistening cheeks, and looked after them. Her lips were parted and tremulous. Softly she stole to the door. David Stein came out of his modest obscurity to face her. She recoiled. He shut the door. "Seven years ago," said he, "you slapped my face."

Mademoiselle Joseph was white with amazement. David Stein put his hands behind him and examined her as a critic. "Well, sir?" she gasped.

"I should like to make you do it now. That is all," said David Stein.

Mademoiselle Joseph recoiled farther. "You are—you must be—you are M. Stein?"

"I could wish you to be as glad of that as I am," said David Stein pensively.

Mademoiselle Joseph tried to produce a polite smile. "I am sure you are very welcome, M. Stein."

"I think better of you than to believe it;" there was a flicker in his eyes as he watched her, and she blushed.

"I am only an interruption. And you are woman enough to be passionate in bliss."

"Bliss?" she breathed, and looked at him with bold, proud, defiant eyes.

"But I cannot believe in the gentleman with the complexion," David Stein informed her. "So I offer my earnest condolence."

She was nearly as ruddy as Bourrienne. She stamped her foot: "Oh, you are intolerable!" she cried. "It was insolent in him! It was impudent! I had—he had—he had no right. I detest him!"

Mentally, spiritually, David Stein was defeated and stupefied. Nothing in his manner admitted it. He opened the door: "The ruddy gentleman," he said blandly, "will be surprised when you tell him the news."

"Oh!" she gasped, and glared at him, trembling in wrath too great for words; then she whirled out.

David Stein scratched his chin—and wandered across the room to a mirror and pensively watched himself being scratched.

M. de Bourrienne, in fact, whom there is no reason to suspect of being a wise man, had gone a great deal too fast. Mademoiselle Joseph was still far from being ready for him to kiss her. She had indeed arrived at thinking him a very fine man, but he had waked no more ardent emotion, and to be caught and crushed and kissed with the freedom of the camp—that frightened and disgusted her. It was a state of mind quite beyond the intelligence of Bourrienne. He conceived that he had sealed his union with her and her inheritance.

In M. Joseph's office he was explaining to M. Joseph—who interpolated torrents of polyglot wrath—how ardently Mademoiselle Joseph adored him, when Mademoi-

selle Joseph stood in the doorway. "My beautiful one! My well beloved!" said Bourrienne, kissing his hand to her.

Mademoiselle Joseph stood white and stern. "My father—he is abominable—this gentleman"—she spoke in throbs—"he is insolent—I will not have him here." The words were for her father, but her eyes struck at Bourrienne. Bourrienne muttered something under his breath of bad odour. Her father started up in gleeful wrath. "You hear it, insolence? You hear it? And do you tell me now that she is in love with you? No, it is a lie!" Mademoiselle Joseph lingered a moment, her eyes angry upon Bourrienne, then with dignity retired. "It is a lie, and you are a villain!" cried M. Joseph.

Bourrienne started up. "Be careful, old fool!"

"Careful? I will be very careful that my house sees no more of you. You are a guest, you eat my salt, and you put an insult upon my daughter. Very well. Very well, M. de Bourrienne. But it shall not be any more. Be pleased to go, most honourable M. de Bourrienne."

"The girl is a jilt, a baggage," cried Bourrienne.

"She drew me on, she——"

M. Joseph gave a somewhat shrill laugh. "Oh, this is very good manners, is it not, M. de Bourrienne? And her father is to listen to it? It is quite enough, M. de Bourrienne. Do me the kindness to go away."

"Old fool, remember who I am!" cried Bourrienne.

"I know quite well what you are, most honourable M. de Bourrienne, and I will hear nothing of you but good-bye."

"You are mad," cried Bourrienne, and vociferated further.

M. Joseph called two clerks and bade them show the

gentleman out, and left Bourrienne to say what he pleased and go when he would. The deplorable affair having occurred before the eyes of a so desirable son-in-law had agitated him excessively. He was burning to explain it away.

He found David Stein alone, and exhausted himself in many words. Then David Stein spoke: "Who did you say the gentleman was?"

"The rascal—the shameless rascal—is the secretary of General Bonaparte," M. Joseph panted.

David Stein—it was his first sign of emotion—allowed a small smile to cross his face as he gazed upon M. Joseph.

M. Joseph became cold. "What is that you mean?" he asked in a hurry.

"I do not know what I mean yet," said David Stein. "It's rather confusing, isn't it?" He continued to smile on the alarmed M. Joseph, who had begun to find some difficulty in breathing. "Perhaps General Bonaparte's secretary is now suggesting to General Bonaparte that you are a cow worth milking." M. Joseph inarticulately protested. "What might General Bonaparte's secretary be doing here at all?"

"That is what I have been trying to get out of him," M. Joseph cried.

"Ah!" David Stein's eyes flickered. "With the assistance of Mademoiselle Eve?"

M. Joseph execrated the iniquity of Bourrienne.

"You are like the fellow who asked a wolf to dinner and complained of its appetite," said David Stein. "Well, has he let out anything?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all!" cried M. Joseph, and again was shrill.

David Stein tapped his teeth. "Now, besides kissing

Mademoiselle Eve, what has he been doing in Genoa?"

"How do I know?" said M. Joseph. "Nothing but dance or dine. I have met him many times."

"At the houses of your friends?" M. Joseph admitted it. "Who are probably all bankers?"

"You mean, of course," said M. Joseph, "what I think myself. He is sent to sound in Genoa about the making of a loan."

"Or a theft," said David Stein, and again M. Joseph's horrified eyes encountered a small smile. It grew. It brought forth a chuckle.

M. Joseph flushed. His voice rose. "What the devil——"

"I came here in an American ship," David Stein's voice was plaintive, still and gentle; "I am keeping her here. She is as uncomfortable as usual. But the captain is honest. And the flag is—safe." He paused and appeared to meditate on the stupefaction of M. Joseph. "If I had any bullion in Genoa, I should put it aboard the *Mary Haven* invoiced as silk. And I should arrange my ledgers to abolish the value of that bullion. In case—anything happened."

M. Joseph was then eloquent. M. Joseph gave out many large, vague, and respectable reasons against being afraid, and palpitated with fear. M. Joseph made all the objections to trusting his gold to the *Mary Haven*, and asked how he should get it there. M. Joseph, in fact, was not constructed to deal with the extraordinary.

But that placid Jew mind, which in Bonaparte's despite turned the fortune of the world, had no trouble in manipulating M. Joseph. He obediently sent to the Bank of St. George to draw out the most of his balance. In the dark of the night a party of seamen of the *Mary*

*Haven* bore certain weighty bales from the *Via della Maddalena* down to the quay. And M. Joseph's portable fortune—three-fourths at least of his life—lay under the care of Stein and Stein.

Through the midnight hours M. Joseph made fiction in his ledgers and began to be very unhappy. Stein and Stein, indeed, were held on 'change to be quite pedantically honourable, but he had never given them the chance to be anything else. M. Joseph had the temper of a man who thinks no one so likely to be robbed as himself. It is not a comfortable possession. His soul mourned for his bullion.

David Stein after making a precise estimate of the total of M. Joseph's fortune, and some other calculations that would have appalled M. Joseph, had found peaceful and quiet sleep. He would not be likely to snore.

Now Bourrienne had gone away anxious, there is no doubt, to show spite. But he was delayed. He found Bonaparte bent over a translation of Barclay's "Geography," with great maps of the East hanging down from his table. Bourrienne saluted twice before he was seen. "In the matter of the list of bankers, General——" he began.

Bonaparte waved his hand. "To-morrow, to-morrow."

Bourrienne, though somewhat swollen with venom, knew his master too well to show impatience. He retired discreetly.

Bonaparte drew over the table a map of Egypt and the Nile.

From his first manhood he was possessed with dreams of the East. The vast space of Asia, her teeming races, allured him. There was a mine of the rude matter of life that his greedy ambition longed to work and shape

and wield. Asia was lined with no stubborn barriers of patriotism, no old loyalties to give him pause. Always the sturdy, self-reliant minds of Europe irked him. "Men are too civilized," he grumbled to Marmont. "There is nothing left to be done." He wanted the fanatic masses of Asia, blind armies of a despot's will.

He had tried his own power and proved it in the campaign of Italy. He had made himself into a consummate soldier, and he knew it. Now he was eager for the adventure of his dreams. He turned his back on the spirit of the West, on the faith of the Revolution. "Europe is a molehill. All the great reputations have come from Asia." So he said to Bourrienne, and sent him to Genoa to find out which of the bankers were worth plundering. A little money was needed for the journey to the Empire of the World.

In the morning, according to the custom of peace, Bourrienne came to him as soon as he was in his dressing-gown. While a barber shaved him and arranged his uninteresting hair, Bourrienne read to him the *Moniteur* and every other newspaper that could be had. Then they went upstairs to the cabinet, where the industrious Bourrienne had set letters and dispatches in array. Bonaparte sat down to his table and found upon it a list of certain bankers, with an amount entered against each name. He frowned: "We settled this yesterday Bourrienne," he said sharply.

"With your permission, sir, I think there is another who will be worth adding." Bonaparte grunted. "Joseph. Of the Via della Maddalena. He would be good for another million francs. His business is chiefly ——" Bourrienne went on with fluent information, but Bonaparte was leaning back to watch him.

“Why have you only just found him?” The question cut sharp across Bourrienne’s swift words.

“I had been deceived as to his resources, sir,” said Bourrienne readily.

“Or you had failed to get a bribe from him?” Bourrienne faced the cold eyes, and protested vehemently his honesty.

“You talk too much,” said Bonaparte. “I know you have a greedy pocket, Bourrienne. Remember—you will be unwise to fill it out of my affairs.”

Bourrienne was again protesting with tearful eloquence. “Do not make a noise. Put his name on the list. Have it sent to Savary. He has his orders. Now write.” There was begun a dispatch to the Directory concerning the poverty of Genoa.

Now David Stein, who was of a contemplative nature, spent that morning upon the quays watching the water. He thus acquired benevolence, and in the warm drowsy hours of afternoon, “It would be soothing to them both,” said he, “if they saw me.” And he made for the Via della Maddalena.

M. Joseph, with the excuse of a sleepless night, was prolonging his siesta, but the sound of the name of Stein woke him with a jerk. He hurried with his neck-cloth awry, to embrace David Stein, and then shook his hand: “Nothing has happened, you know, nothing at all,” he whispered.

“Do not be disappointed,” said David Stein.

“Disappointed!” M. Joseph exclaimed several times and began to babble about his money. David Stein said a little from time to time, till the styptic power of his placidity dried up the doubts exuding from M. Joseph’s fear.



"I came," David Stein remarked, "to speak to your daughter. I did not feel it was a moment for me to present my devotion yesterday."

"The money remaining always at my immediate order," said M. Joseph, following his own thought. "*Hein?* Oh, yes, of course. The abominable rascal! Come and see her."

This time Mademoiselle Joseph was alone, reposing. She received the introduction with a blush and an elevated head. "I hope, my dear," said M. Joseph, who knew the signs of a storm in his daughter, "that you will make M. Stein very welcome. If you win him for your friend it will be very well for you."

"I do not hope ever to make mademoiselle that," said David Stein, with a bow.

"Admirable," said M. Joseph, and went out.

Mademoiselle Joseph looked at David Stein haughtily, and David Stein, standing over her, met her eyes with all his wonted calm. "We have to consider, mademoiselle," said he, "that your father expects us to marry."

Mademoiselle started up from her couch to face him. "You—oh, you are too flattering, sir," she laughed, but her cheeks were dark.

"I think it is amusing myself," David Stein agreed. "So let us consider the consequences."

"There will be no consequences, sir," cried Mademoiselle Joseph.

"Oh, I hope so. For instance, when we are married, I shall not expect you to blush so much."

"You are impertinent, sir."

"That also will cease when we——"

Mademoiselle Joseph stamped her foot. "Will you understand, sir, that this is offensive?"

"Nevertheless, let us examine it calmly. You will find it more amusing to marry some one. Now, you know my worst fault—it is that I never lose my temper. You will find that irritating, but not unwholesome in a husband. Otherwise, I assure you, I am attractive. . . . If you marry some one else you will disappoint your father and never know absolute calm."

"Will you be good enough to go, sir?" said Mademoiselle Joseph, in her coldest tones.

"Some men," David Stein admitted, "might take you to mean that you refused my——"

"I do refuse, sir," cried Mademoiselle Joseph; "I utterly refuse."

"In fact," said David Stein, "I did not expect you to do anything else."

Mademoiselle Joseph, gazing upon him, was speechless and seemed to pant a little. "But you will admit that it was polite in me to ask you."

"I—I—I—" she stammered in her wrath—"I do not know why you please to insult me. Why do you come? Why are you here?"

"I have wondered a little myself," David Stein admitted. "I think it is because I once kissed you."

Again her cheeks were dark, and as swiftly they paled she turned on him. "I will tell you why you come. You hear I have money. You want it."

"Once," said David Stein, "you slapped my face. Now—well, it is the same thing."

"And I detest you now as I detested you then," she cried.

"I find you equally attractive," said he.

Mademoiselle Joseph bit her lip. She surveyed him from head to heel and with some contempt. "It is—oh,

well, it is not worth while to be angry with you. You are so insignificant."

"This method," said David Stein critically, "is indeed more dignified."

She laughed with some effort. "Well, sir, there are people to whom one does not trouble about dignity."

"It is," David Stein agreed, "a proof of confidence and affection."

"Or of contempt."

"Previously," said he, "you only slapped my face once."

"You provoked me less, I suppose."

"I wonder," said David Stein critically, and approached her. She recoiled in a hurry. "Have you no confidence in your power to resist?" he inquired.

"The fact is, sir," said she, keeping a table between them, "that you are no longer amusing, and so——"

"But happily you have not deteriorated."

"And so," said Mademoiselle Joseph, "I will beg your leave to retire."

"It is," said David Stein, "your first confession of defeat."

Mademoiselle Joseph did not attempt to have the last word. This somewhat surprised David Stein, whose taste, as you have seen, was poor. It is to be feared that Mademoiselle Joseph was never sufficiently attentive to this. To the end she allowed his audacity to obscure for her his vulgarity.

On the next morning David Stein, who was of regular habits, again watched the water in the harbour. When he came back to his inn he found his secretary out, and the street in some commotion. David Stein went to his lunch without asking questions. His secretary re-

turned to announce that the French had arrested four bankers on the charge of traffic with the Austrians. M. Joseph was one. David Stein made a good lunch. After it he went to the Via della Maddalena.

There was a French sentry before the door of M. Joseph's counting-house. Two non-commissioned officers were at work within, sealing desks and strong-boxes. Another sentry guarded the private door. David Stein was lounging past him. "Now then!" cried the man, grounding arms before David Stein's toes. "What do you want? The old Jew has gone to the guardroom."

"I knew that two days ago," said David Stein.

"Curse you for a liar! That was before it happened."

"What is the use of knowing things after they happen?" said David Stein. Being a Frenchman, the sentry grinned. "Daughters are more sport than fathers. I want to see her."

"You will have to make love to her before old Brass Neck," said the sentry, and called to his sergeant. "The gentleman wants to kiss the Jewess, sergeant," said he.

The sergeant winked. "If that is all, I'll turn my back. If it's anything else, my son, look after yourself."

One of the palpitating maids was sent to warn Mademoiselle Joseph. David Stein and the sergeant entered her salon, and the sergeant flung himself down on the couch and drummed with his nailed shoes. David Stein regarded him without anger.

Mademoiselle Joseph came in swiftly—her face was grey and heavy, her eyes dull, and her hair. David Stein bowed almost like a gentleman.

"Bill and coo, my dears," said the sergeant, "Old Cousin is blind," and he lay on his back and kicked at the air.

“M. Stein—my father——” she breathed.

“Is in no kind of danger,” said David Stein.

“Hola!” cried the sergeant, raising himself, “who are you that answers for the Little Corporal?”

“You mean it?” mademoiselle gasped. “You know? It is true? They say he lent money to the Austrians. They say he——”

“There is nothing to be afraid of in Bonaparte,” said David Stein. “Oh, believe me. I have believed in myself more than thirty years. You shall do it for the next thirty. It pays well. . . . you are not quite able to think me serious. Try. It will be worth while. That is all I have to say—till your father is back. Good afternoon.” And he was gone.

“Name of a little grey dog!” cried the sergeant. “You have the queerest lover I ever knew, Jewess.”

Mademoiselle Joseph’s heart in the midst of anxieties consented to think about it.

David Stein—it is this in him that I chiefly admire—went to call on Bonaparte.

To the officer of the guard at the Palazzo Ducale he called himself David Stein of Guntter and Goldschild of Hamburg. It was the name of a great firm of money brokers that had done his father an ill turn. He explained that he had a matter of finance to submit to General Bonaparte, and after some parley, to Bonaparte he came. I like to see them together—Bonaparte’s great brow and the gleam of steel beneath, and his grim dark strength, over against the little pale face of the Jew. Bonaparte examined him and found nothing of interest.

“What do you want with me?” Bonaparte snapped.

“I want to lend you money,” said David Stein.

"Who told you that I wanted money?"

"You did—when you arrested four bankers."

Bonaparte's eyes woke to examine him again. But he could see nothing extraordinary in David Stein, save that he was so extremely ordinary. "How do you know that it is safe to lend to me?"

David Stein shrugged lightly. "One always takes risks," he said, and yawned. The operation caused him to look away from Bonaparte, and he saw on a side table a map of Egypt.

"Why lend to me?"

"You must want money, or you would not be robbing the bankers——"

"Have a care what you say, sirrah!"

"I am talking business," said David Stein coolly. "Your credit is bad. You might pay well for a loan."

"On the contrary," said Bonaparte, "I shall pay nothing."

"Good afternoon," said David Stein, and turned away—a movement which brought him in face of a shelf of books. In the middle of them he saw a copy of the Koran.

"You will go when I have done with you," said Bonaparte. David Stein turned at his leisure. The title of another book, "Les Arabes," had caught his eye. "What loan were you going to offer?"

"Anything up to a million and a half francs," said David Stein carelessly.

Bonaparte, who had taken him for a common money-lender of some audacity, showed his surprise. "It would not be wise to lie to me," he said, with a grim note in his voice.

David Stein shrugged. "Why should I?" said he.

"If you have no credentials, sirrah," Bonaparte's brow was lowering, "you will be sorry that you came."

"You are not businesslike," David Stein complained. "If I lend you good money, what else matters to you? Well—you are only a soldier. I am David Stein, last partner in Gunter and Goldschild, of Hamburg. I have been in the American bottom *Mary Haven* calling at Lisbon, Oporto, Cadiz, and Marseilles, collecting our bills. I find you—oh, you are dainty about words—purveying—the bankers' balances. I am ready to lend you up to a million if it will pay me. Is it worth your while?"

They began to haggle, and haggled earnestly. By long and by last they whittled their hearty desires to cheat each other down to this. David Stein would lend nine hundred thousand francs on consideration of being repaid fifteen hundred thousand at the end of three years. There was to be no interest. The bargain was plainly good enough for David Stein if it was kept: his profit would be big enough if he got it. "It is understood," said Bonaparte, "that you lend on the security of the French Republic."

"The French Republic be damned," said David Stein. It had recently repudiated a third of its debt. "I am lending to General Bonaparte. On bonds signed with your own name." David Stein, as his way was when he was negotiating money, became curter and ruder as they haggled it out at length. He had his way. Bonaparte promised one hundred and fifty bonds for ten thousand francs, to be paid between three and three and a half years from date. David Stein helped himself to a sheet of Bonaparte's official paper, and drew the bond. He tossed it across to Bonaparte. "About the

money," said he carelessly. "Will you take a proportion in silver?"

"It is indifferent," said Bonaparte, after a moment.

"Good," said David Stein, as he rose. He was remembering that silver was useful in the East. "Well, it's a pleasure to do business with you—you have a clear head. Good-day."

Bonaparte did not answer. He was not used to being complimented by gentlemen with the air of respectable clerks; but he would not quarrel with David Stein at the moment. It would be time enough for that when he repudiated the debt. And they parted happily enough, each conceiving that he knew how to cheat the other.

So David Stein arranged to dispose of the fortune of the unfortunate M. Joseph, whose one consolation as he lay in a dim cell of the prison was that his money had gone beyond Bonaparte's reach. M. Joseph deserves perhaps some pity. His cell was uncomfortable, and he feared for his skin. Like the rest of the poor creatures whom Bonaparte wished to bleed, he had been told that his crime was plotting with Austria against France. M. Joseph had never seen a plot in his life, but he had dealings in Austrian bonds upon his conscience, and through one long day of misery he saw himself shot and hanged and tortured.

Bonaparte, of course, had never thought of putting one of the wretched bankers to death. As soon as they were in prison their strong-rooms were ransacked, ostensibly for treasonous papers, in reality for money. When a day of fear and death had dissipated their spirits, each one was told that he would be released in a month on payment of a fine. M. Joseph's fine, calculated on



the scanty remnants of his wealth, was but small, and though he wailed to the officer who announced it and protested that he could never pay, privately he hugged himself upon the wisdom of David Stein. And David Stein had lent three parts of that hardly salved fortune to Bonaparte.

In these few days David Stein, preserving always his air of ease, was very active, though his activities were mainly subterraneous. By means of a bribed goaler he kept an eye on the health and sayings of M. Joseph. Another modest bribe—he knew the value of money—gave him the power to watch over mademoiselle more closely than she ever knew. Meanwhile he was zealous in carrying through the loan, and as soon as the first batch of Bonaparte's bonds were in his hands he sent off his clerk with them to Milan. The rest, a day later, he dispatched to Paris. Then he had a little leisure.

Now M. de Bourrienne, when he found how miserable were the results of pillaging to M. Joseph's strong-room, conceived himself well out of the affair with mademoiselle. Nevertheless he owed them some revenge, and the method that occurred to him was to make a little money out of them. So as soon as M. Joseph's fine was fixed, off went Bourrienne to mademoiselle. The army did not love M. de Bourrienne excessively, and when her maid said that mademoiselle would not see M. de Bourrienne the jolly sergeant in charge of the banker's office laughed in his face. M. de Bourrienne snarled at the sergeant and maid, and sent a message that if mademoiselle valued her father's life she would receive him speedily. The threat sufficed. M. de Bourrienne was admitted, and the sergeant, who knew the feel of David Stein's francs, lounged off to tell David Stein all about him.

So that Mademoiselle Joseph, in tears and disorder—the result of the amiability of M. de Bourrienne—was surprised by the placid visage of David Stein.

“It is impossible,” said David Stein, regarding her without emotion, “that there can be anything worth crying for in Bourrienne.”

“He is a beast,” sobbed Mademoiselle Joseph. “But how—how—how—did you know?” And behind her tears her eyes swelled with fear at the alarming knowledge of David Stein.

“You happen to matter,” said David Stein coolly. “How is the beast, beastly today?”

“He said that my father is going to be—be—killed,” mademoiselle gasped, and was overcome with tears.

David Stein, who knew all about the fate of M. Joseph, even to the precise amount of the fine, looked bored.

“Oh, why do you sneer?” she cried.

“It was not amusing enough to smile,” David Stein explained.

She made a gesture of disgust. “It is true—it is true! He says my father will be killed, and he will not save him unless I pay him twenty thousand francs. And I have nothing—nothing! . . . Oh, you are detestable!”

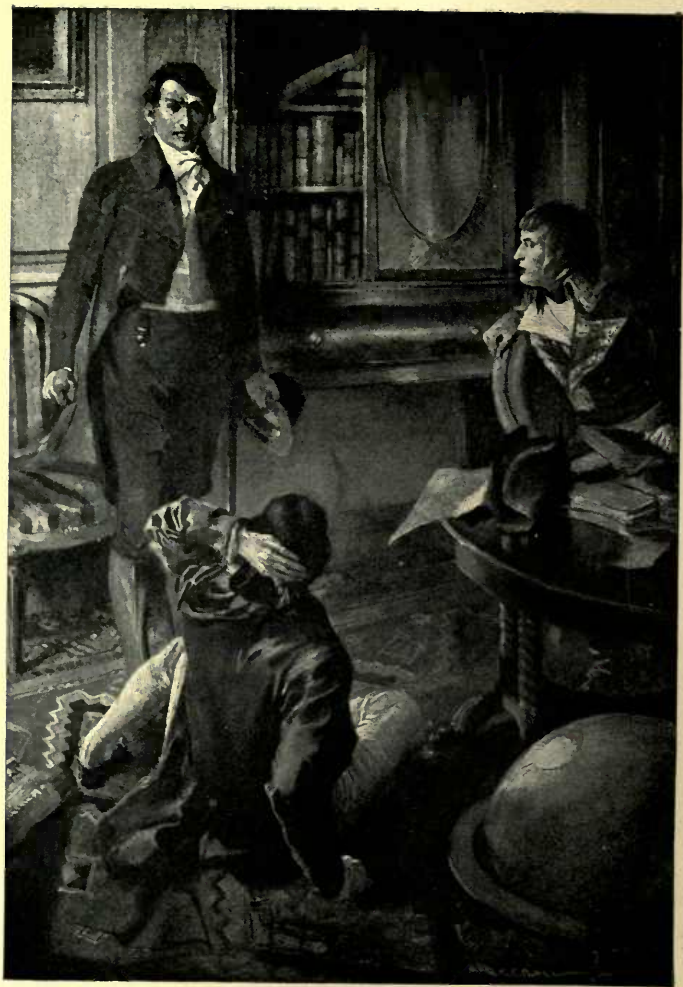
For David Stein was now adorning himself with a small smile. “Let us be quite clear about it,” he said calmly. “This Bourrienne said he would have your father killed unless you bribed him?”

She confirmed it with a sob.

“It is really gratifying,” said David Stein, and took his hat and went out. Mademoiselle was surprised at her own relief. . . .

He made his way to the Palazzo Ducale, and he asked carefully, first if General Bonaparte, secondly if M.





"Very Well," said David Stein, and knocked him down

de Bourrienne, was there. Bonaparte only was to be found, and David Stein, not satisfied with him, went away for a while. A while later, both Bourrienne and Bonaparte were to be found.

David Stein elected for Bourrienne. Bourrienne, who knew David Stein of Guntter and Goldschild as a man of money, received him with eager politeness.

David Stein looked bored. He asked if M. de Bourrienne would be so kind as to ask General Bonaparte to give him a moment. Bourrienne, flattered at the flattery, went off at once, and soon, smirking, conducted David Stein to the presence.

Bonaparte looked up from a cumbrous book. As he bowed, David Stein saw the title of it—"Les Mame-lucks."

Bourrienne presented him to Bonaparte elaborately.

He turned to Bourrienne. "Now, about this M. Joseph?" said he.

M. de Bourrienne blushed violently. He made frantic signs to David Stein, which David Stein omitted to see, but not Bonaparte.

"You," David Stein went genially on, "you have been telling his daughter that you will have him hanged if she does not bribe you."

The unhappy Bourrienne met Bonaparte's eye. It was not encouraging. He made an incoherent exclamation.

"Very well," said David Stein, and knocked him down. Bonaparte sprang up with an oath. "What damnable insolence is this, rascal?"

"It is a lie," Bourrienne wailed from the floor; "it is entirely a lie."

David Stein sat down. "The gentleman, whom I

hope I have hurt," said he, "has been very annoying. This M. Joseph has a pretty daughter. She did not want this gentleman to kiss her. You cannot blame her for that. But he threatened to make her pay for it. Well, what he told you about her father you know best. And you know best what you put him in prison for. But I'll swear it was not for this gentleman to swindle the girl out of ten thousand francs."

David Stein had spoken better than he knew. For Bonaparte, who remembered everything, remembered at once how Bourrienne had put M. Joseph on the list after it was made, and how worthless M. Joseph had proved. He knew Bourrienne's habits of small extortion. By Bourrienne's flood of words, abuse of M. Joseph and mademoiselle, tearful protestations of virtue, invocations of France and his mother's honour, he was not warmed.

David Stein waited for a check in the eloquence, and then: "After all," said he, "you did go, for the sergeant saw you go, to mademoiselle's this afternoon. What for?"

He turned carelessly away and glanced at a book. It was the volume of Barclay's "Geography" dealing with Egypt.

"I suspected you, Bourrienne. I warned you," said Bonaparte, and struck his bell. He demanded the lieutenant of the guard; he set M. de Bourrienne, who was now bedewed with tears, under arrest. Then he turned upon David Stein. There was the gleam of a smile in his eyes. "And why," said he, "is M. Stein so interested in M. Joseph?"

"She is a pretty girl," said David Stein.

"Is that all you came to say to me?"

"She wants M. Joseph. So I have to want him," said David Stein, and he yawned at the thought. "Well, let me put it to you. He is not worth much. You know Bourrienne only set him on your list because he wanted to make his private twopence-ha'penny. I have been some little use to you. Let me have M. Joseph."

"Mademoiselle Joseph has no doubt very beautiful eyes?" Bonaparte inquired suavely.

"There is no more beautiful woman," said David Stein, with calm assurance.

"My felicitations. But your eyes are not very beautiful, M. Stein, and I am not going to give you anything for their sake."

David Stein was frankly annoyed. He was rude. "Do you mean to go in for Bourrienne's trade?" he snarled.

Bonaparte laughed. "Let me put it to you," he said, mocking Stein's placid phrase. "I thought I could only get twenty-five thousand francs of a fine out of M. Joseph. But I find there is some one who wants him, and his price goes up to a hundred thousand."

"It is a damned theft," said David Stein, who was very angry.

Bonaparte laughed. "You must expect to pay for the beauty," said he.

David Stein began to haggle, and haggled hard and well and long; but Bonaparte was stubborn, and at last difficultly he was forced to Bonaparte's price. "I'll pay it and curse you for a thief," he snarled. He was in the worst of temper. "You'll have the money in the morning. I'll have the man."

"I congratulate you on your affection for your father-in-law," said Bonaparte, smiling.

David Stein growled something that does not matter, and glared at Bonaparte, who ushered him out with politeness. He did not dare take his temper to Mademoiselle Joseph, so he wrote her twelve words to say that her father would be free in the morning. And then he turned his very acute brain to devise damage for Bonaparte. His temper often affected his manner, but never his judgment. . . .

In the morning, after a visit to the *Mary Haven*—the dregs of M. Joseph's fortune provided the ransom of M. Joseph—he came to pay Bonaparte. Now, with a keen interest he marked that every book in Bonaparte's room was concerned with Egypt and the East. He prolonged his business a little while he counted the maps. He was gruff, and Bonaparte genially triumphant.

Once out of Bonaparte's presence his sulkiness wore away. M. Joseph, brought to freedom by the expensive order of release, found him placidly ordinary. M. Joseph embraced him with fervour.

"You are not your daughter," said David Stein, extricating himself.

"My son," cried M. Joseph, "you have saved me. I have a thousand things to say."

"Then do not say them in the street," said David Stein.

M. Joseph recovered himself, tapped his nose, and praised David Stein's wisdom. On their way to the Via della Maddalena, M. Joseph was continually talking, checking himself violently when he began to say anything of importance. David Stein did not listen much. It is to be recorded to M. Joseph's credit that once safe in his house he embraced his daughter before he asked



after his money. He thrust the smiling girl at David Stein, crying: "Thank him, my daughter. He has saved us. He has saved my fortune."

"If monsieur pleases," said the girl, her eyes veiled—"if monsieur pleases."

Monseieur was pleased to take no notice.

"We shall have to get out of this town, you know," he said to M. Joseph.

"At once!" cried M. Joseph. "We will sail at once on your ship with my finances."

"We shan't sail with your finances," said David Stein placidly. "I have lent them to Bonaparte."

M. Joseph screamed. Then he repeated the words again and again, and at last believed and raved and wept. Before the tears came, David Stein—whom mademoiselle had been watching calmly indeed, but with wonder and fear—sat down at the table and began to write. To M. Joseph in his hysteria he gave a paper still wet. It was a promise to pay fourteen hundred thousand francs, signed in the name of Stein and Stein.

M. Joseph's ravings checked suddenly with a queer choking cough. He tried in vain for a moment to speak. "Fourteen hundred thousand?" he gasped. "But I had only twelve hundred thousand on your ship. What is it? How——"

"Do not make a noise like a hen," said David Stein, "and I will tell you." What he told was chiefly this. He lent Bonaparte nine hundred thousand francs, you remember, in return for bonds for fifteen hundred thousand. Part of those bonds he had sold to the Directory in Paris, part to Bonaparte's generals in Milan, fat with Italian plunder, for twelve hundred and fifty thousand. David Stein, making forty per cent. profit, did not mind

their netting twenty per cent. It all came out of Bonaparte. On the *Mary Haven* there remained three hundred thousand francs, of which one hundred thousand had to be paid for M. Joseph's ransom. Bonaparte had spoilt the pure beauty of the speculation.

"It is a nuisance," said David Stein frankly, "and I do not know that you are worth it. But even so there are two hundred thousand of profit."

"It is wonderful. It is a miracle. It is sixteen per cent.," cried M. Joseph, and shook David Stein's hands with fervour.

"But we shall have to get out of this town," said David Stein, "for when Bonaparte finds that he owes fifteen hundred thousand to Masséna and Augereau and Barras, instead of David Stein, he may not be pleased." He allowed himself a small smile. "They will be able to see themselves paid, you see."

"It is magnificent," cried M. Joseph. "Ah, my friend, my son, it is a noble thing. How shall I thank you?"

"You might go away," said David Stein. M. Joseph gasped. David Stein directed his eyes to mademoiselle. "Mademoiselle would probably prefer you to go away," he explained. And M. Joseph went, calling down blessings.

David Stein approached the delectable shyness of mademoiselle. He took her chin in his hand and lifted her head. "It does please me, you know," said he.

She turned her eyes to his. . . .

But even so David Stein had not settled his account with Bonaparte.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was in the instructions of the Admiralty to my

Lord St. Vincent that a fleet should be sent into the Mediterranean to attend to Bonaparte: "and my lords suggest to you the propriety of putting it under the command of Sir Horatio Nelson." Sir Horatio Nelson, Rear-Admiral of the Blue, sailed with three ships of the line, and Troubridge followed with ten from Cadiz and the brig *La Mutine*.

Bonaparte had won to Egypt, beaten the power of the Mamelukes and set himself to wake the old splendours of the land. His men of science turned to study the river and the soil, his scholars broke into the treasures of Memphis and the vast monuments of the mother of civilisations. But Bonaparte lived in the present. He was eager to enlist the religion of the East. Mahomet's followers would be led by none but a believer in Mahomet. He began to deal with the Sheiks and Imaums. Might one uncircumcised, he asked, come into the true fold? And the Imaums of Cairo told him that it might be.

The stars were white in a black vault over Cairo. On the roof of the palace of Murad Bey Bonaparte walked with Monge and Berthollet and other men of science, and they philosophised and talked atheism. . . . Bonaparte walked listening, a while silent. Then he pointed up to the dark dome of stars. "Messieurs, who made all that? . . ."

A while later the muezzin's voices pealed the *Abràr*, the call to prayer, and Bonaparte in turban and the garb of the Faithful went into the Mosque of Taylun and there, beneath the close-woven fretwork and flowers and the blazoned quotations of the Koran, rocked himself and prayed loud in the orthodoxy of Mahomet. . . .

His was the religion that paid him cash. Whether

he found ever anything better—well, it may be that now he knows.

Away in Aboukir Bay the fleet, his one bond with France, went down that night to doom. Before sundown Nelson had seen their topmasts against the southern sky and his fleet hauled sharp on the wind, and the signals flew and they formed in line ahead. The French ships swung at anchor between the island and the land in the lee of a long shoal. It was close upon dusk and the strait was perilous. But Nelson brought his fleet in cleared for action. Captain Hood, in the *Zealous* was leading, and as they drew abeam of the island Nelson hailed to ask if he had water enough to clear the shoal; then the *Zealous* bore up and took soundings, spending the dear minutes of daylight. Nelson risked no more than he must. With the *Goliath* drawing close upon her lee bow, the *Zealous* slipped between the French fleet and the land. And the English ships gathered about the van of the French, and the battle was set, and in a little while the *Guerrier* and the *Conquérant* lay shattered to silence. Night fell, and still the broadsides flamed and thundered and the dark water glowed. Three hours after battle was joined a red glow broke out on the French flagship *Orient* and the *Bellerophon* turned her guns upon the fire until the great ship was rent in light and thunder and the zenith and the waves were all one lurid cloud of flame. When morning came six French ships of the line had struck, three were beaten ashore and the charred timbers of the flagship were scattered all across the Bay. Bonaparte was cut off from France.

The tidings came to him at Cairo, and he grew pale, they say, and cursed the dead admiral a while. Half his

hopes were gone. He might go on some little way and conquer, but England held the sea, and even with victory his army must wane and wane. He could draw no new strength from France. So he abused the dead.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was some time before he awoke to the alarm of his generals. Then he slapped Murat on the shoulder. "Well!" he cried. "Here we must stay or win a grandeur like that of the ancients." But Murat turned off with a shrug. He was not in love with the adventure, not he nor Lannes nor Bessières, nor even Berthier, and the palsy of doubt spread over the army.

When Nelson sent his prisoners ashore they brought with them, among other letters, this:

TO HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL BONAPARTE.

When negotiating some small matters with you at Genoa I had the pleasure of noting the literature which engaged your attention. I was therefore able to acquaint my Lord Spencer and the English Board of Admiralty with your intention to attack Egypt, and they very kindly arranged for an English fleet to look after you. I hope you liked it. It was perhaps not worth while to charge so dear for M. Joseph.

With assurance of distinguished esteem.

DAVID STEIN,

pp. Gunter and Goldschild.

That firm, you remember, had done an ill turn to David Stein's father.

## CHAPTER X

### HOW HE FAILED HIS FORTUNE

FROM the mound where Richard Cœur de Lion stood long ago General Bonaparte watched dawn break upon the ramparts of St. Jean d'Acre. The violet sky changed for a brighter blue, the black sea grew violet to the sparkling silver of the beach, and walls and towers were of gold. General Bonaparte stood still leaning upon the great shoulder of Jean Dortan, the sturdy Dauphiny blacksmith, half-servant, half-guard, all friend. He pointed to the scanty circuit of the town. "There is the key of the world, Jean," said he.

Jean Dortan shrugged. "It is a very little key for so large a world, my general."

"You see only with your eyes, my poor Jean."

"Then I see only what is."

"But not all of it. See with my mind, Jean. I take that baby of a town. I find in it the pacha's treasures and arms for three hundred thousand men. I raise all Syria against the Turk. I make an end of slavery, and the slaves are for me. I take Damascus, Aleppo. I come down upon Constantinople with the greatest army in the world. I overthrow the Sultan. I found a new vast Empire of the East. Then I take Europe in reverse. I abolish Austria, Prussia. I return to France world conqueror."

Jean Dortan shrugged. "If it amuses you, my general——" said he.

Bonaparte laughed and pinched his ear. "Giant, have you no ambition, then?"

"I like to sleep o' nights," said Jean Dortan.

Over the southward horizon white topsails rose. Bonaparte took his telescope from Jean Dortan and looked long while the towers of canvas came clearer. "Good! It is my gunboats," he announced and turned smiling to Jean Dortan. "Great animal! Away with you and tell Caffarelli." Jean Dortan ran off, and Bonaparte trained his glass again to seaward. Six craft were making for the roadstead. And now, as the horizon fell back before the brighter light of day, into sight came two ships that bore a heavier press of sail. They were English frigates. Bonaparte smiled. "Good!" said he; "we have tricked our friends the English this time."

Caffarelli came stumping with his wooden leg after Jean Dortan. Bonaparte clapped him on the shoulder. "Ha, my friend! Now we shall finish with St. Jean d'Acre. Here are our boats. You must have their siege-guns in position by sundown."

The old engineer officer held out his hand for Bonaparte's glass and stared stolidly across the roadstead. The gunboats were already shortening sail. "It seems to me," he said at length and deliberately, "it seems to me that our gunboats are flying the English flag."

Bonaparte snatched the glass from him. There was no doubt of it. *Torride, Deux Frères, Dangereux, Dame de Grâce, Négresse, Marie Rose*—over each floated the white ensign of the English navy. Bonaparte smashed his glass together with a snap and, turning on Caffarelli with dark brow and eyes aflame, poured out a volley of curses at his sailors. Then he

strode off, stamping his heels down hard into the sand.

“What he wants, he wants too much, our Little Corporal,” quoth Caffarelli to Jean Dortan. “Well, lend me your shoulder. I have one leg in France, and I do not want to leave the other here.” With Jean Dortan’s aid he stumped laboriously back through the sands.

So the English sailors brought their captured gunboats up to the quay, while the frigates *Alliance* and *Tigre* dropped anchor in the roadstead. Then there came by a flag of truce this letter:

*To GENERAL BONAPARTE, commanding the French Army besieging Acre—*

I have the honour to thank your Excellency for your courtesy in providing me with stores, ammunition, and heavy guns necessary for the defence of Acre. And I have the honour to be, etc., etc.,

SIDNEY SMITH, *Captain H.M.S. Tigre.*

At which Bonaparte snarled profusely, and, having the ability to be very little in little things, wrote a pettish answer. Whereof this is a precise copy, official heading and all:

FRENCH REPUBLIC.

LIBERTY.

EQUALITY.

*Headquarters—*Before St. Jean d’Acre, 10th Floréal, 7th year of the French Republic one and indivisible.

BONAPARTE, *General-in-Chief of the Army of the East,*

*To CAPTAIN SMITH, H.M.S. Tigre—*

I desire Captain Smith to request His Britannic



Majesty to send against me a general whom it will be an honour to conquer.

BONAPARTE.

Thereafter, he bade Lannes advance to the assault before the English could get their captured guns in position. Every field-gun Bonaparte had thundered its best against the age-worn bastions of Acre. The scarred swarthy veterans of Lannes' division dashed up to the dry moat and down into it, and struggled up the crumbling walls beyond. But the Albanian riflemen within poured down a steady fire, and in the crest of the wall the Turks stood desperate at bay with pike and scimitar. The English frigates weighed, and running close in upon the shallows, poured a hail of death upon the storming party. Thrice Lannes led his men up the ramparts. Thrice they were beaten back with heavy slaughter.

Bonaparte, who had watched the fight with calm eyes, rode down to embrace Lannes as a hero, and bid him waste no more men. The panting, bleeding soldiers thronged round Bonaparte's horse and begged him let them tempt death again. He had a few fine sentences for them, but he bade them back to camp. He could spend life ruthlessly, but he never wasted.

That night came another flag of truce, and another letter from Captain Sidney Smith. Bonaparte read, and broke into a roar of laughter. Captain Sidney Smith, a gentleman who believed in his own importance, had taken Bonaparte's sneer to heart, and sent him a furious challenge to a duel.

"Bourrienne," said Bonaparte to his secretary, "tell

the gentleman Bonaparte will fight a duel when the English send him a Marlborough."

But Captain Sidney Smith, if he lacked a sense of humour where himself was concerned, lacked nothing else to make him a dangerous foe, which, with surprise and wrath, Bonaparte discovered.

Bonaparte plied every device of war against the town. His own siege-guns mocked at him from the ramparts, but the old crumbling emplacements would scarce bear the shock of firing, and from the guns he had little to fear. Old Caffarelli planned and dug a mine beneath the main gate and blew the gate to heaven. Kléber stormed through the breach with his grenadiers, and at the first rush drove the Turks before him. But Captain Sidney Smith raged furiously, and rallied his Turks and brought them to fight hand to hand till he got a company of Albanian riflemen up on the roofs, and their fire mowed the French down. Kléber fell back from the town, leaving half of his men inside. Before the next dawn broke Captain Sidney Smith had the breach built up again. By the harbour gate Bonaparte planned an assault. Captain Sidney Smith put carronades from his frigates aboard light craft, and ran them close in-shore and enfiladed the storming party and blew the heart out of it.

St. Jean d'Acre had slain many a man. More and daily more were dying of fever, borne on the poisonous vapours of the marsh by the Nahr Na'amen.

But Bonaparte, grim-mouthed, growled to Caffarelli: "If the place be fastened with chains to heaven, still I will have it."

"I have little to do with heaven," quoth Cafferelli. "My works are mostly with earth." And he dug

another mine by the north-eastern tower. But that was countermined, and Caffarelli and a hundred men were buried in it.

That night Bonaparte received a polite note from Captain Sidney Smith, requesting him to dig no more mines, as the good folk of Acre had work enough to provide funerals for his dead, and to bury the living also was a bore.

It was that night that Achilles of Ceos came. Bonaparte was in his tent with Berthier and Marmont when Jean Dortan came in. "There is a party at the outposts above the bay," he announced; and held out to Bonaparte a paper whereon was written in a stiff hand, "Achilles of Ceos has matter for Bonaparte of France."

"Here is an original," said Bonaparte. "What is he like, Jean?"

"An assassin," quoth Jean Dortan.

"An original assassin should be amazing. Let us see him, Jean."

Jean Dortan grunted disapproval. He never hid his opinions. But he usually obeyed—and now he went out and dispatched an orderly. He came back to stand behind Bonaparte's chair, his arms crossed over his great chest. Bonaparte leant back, smiled at him, and nodded to Marmont. "My nurse does not trust me much alone, you see."

"I think your life is of some value. You don't. I dare say you are right," quoth Jean Dortan.

There came into the tent a man of middle size wearing the kilts of the Greek islanders. His face was nearly covered in crisp brown curls. Else it was handsome, and his black eyes sparkled strangely.

Over his purple tunic he wore a girdle of gold, and

in that were thrust a pair of silver-butted pistols. There was a short straight sword at his side.

His keen black eyes picked out Bonaparte at once and considered him deliberately. "You are as little as I thought you were," he pronounced. "But you have the eye." He spoke French correctly enough, with a slurred accent.

"What are you, Monsieur Achilles?" Bonaparte inquired.

"The same as yourself," quoth Achilles of Ceos. "Pirate, master of slaves."

"You flatter me," said Bonaparte.

Unbidden, Achilles of Ceos sat himself down. "I am a sea pirate. You are a land pirate. Bonaparte has more fame than Achilles, but I think Achilles has more wealth."

Bonaparte leant back in his chair. The Greek's bluntness pleased him. "Wealth is M. Achilles' aim in this world?"

"No more than your own. Pleasure and power Achilles of Ceos seeks, like all healthy men. What else do you want?"

"Have you heard of glory in Ceos?"

"Glory? A pleasure—and a pleasure that soon sates you. I wanted glory when I was a boy. You will grow up too, Bonaparte. Pleasures that last and power that lasts—those are a man's aim."

"What pleasures last?"

"Children. Children that in their children make a man immortal. But you have not any, Bonaparte."

Achilles of Ceos had shot his shaft clear between the joints of the armour. Bonaparte's sallow face dark-

ened. "Fellow!" he cried harshly, "did you come to preach sermons?"

"No. To help you, Bonaparte."

Bonaparte laughed. "You are modest."

"I am not such a fool. I know what I can do."

"What is it?"

Achilles of Ceos looked at Marmont and Berthier.

"It is for your own ear, Bonaparte."

"I have no secrets from my friends."

"But I have," quoth Achilles of Ceos. "To your own ear or not at all. . . . Oh, if you are afraid you may have guards all round the tent, but I speak to you alone."

Bonaparte stared at him a moment. "Mark you, my friend, I'll not promise to keep your secret secret when I've heard it."

"If you like to blab your own affairs you may. Hear first and judge if it is wise."

"Give me leave, Marmont," said Bonaparte. "Berthier, my friend——" and the two rose and departed. Their gait was contemptuous. Jean Dortan showed no intention of going. "This," said Bonaparte, leaning back and gripping the huge arm, "this is more faithful to me than I am myself."

"You know your slaves best," said Achilles of Ceos. "Now, Bonaparte. You are a great man. You will be greater. I admire you. I am willing to help you if your greatness is one with mine."

"I doubt I could never aspire to that, M. Achilles," said Bonaparte.

"You will always be making fine answers. It is showy. In fact, you are showy, Bonaparte. That belittles you. Now, you are here with your slaves to

conquer the lands of the East. It is a great plan. I approve it. But you are far enough from doing the deed. You are held here before this mud-hole of a town. Who holds you? You know. It is not the Turks. (Achilles spat.) It is not their pacha Gezzar. (Achilles spat again.) It is the Englishman, the Captain Smith. If he were away you might be into the treasures of Acre to-morrow. Then—then there is nothing else to stop you. Bonaparte, you are Emperor of the East if you will be linked with Achilles of Ceos.”

“And equally if I will not, my dear M. Achilles.”

“You think so? While the Captain Smith is inside Acre, are you likely to get in? Your guns, where are they? Your engineer, where is he? How many of your slaves has the Captain Smith killed, Bonaparte? And every day a hundred more fall sick. How much longer dare you wait before Acre? Will you wait with a dead army? In fact, Bonaparte, without Achilles of Ceos you are beaten. But I will help you. I will make an end of the Captain Smith.” . . .

“I was told you were an assassin,” Bonaparte sneered.

“That also when it pays,” said Achilles of Ceos. “But I do not think of killing the Captain Smith. I would take him and sell him for a slave. He would fetch his price at Smyrna. A fine buffoon he would be; it is so easy to make him rage. Well, Bonaparte, the Captain Smith sailing away for a slave market—is that worth anything?”

Bonaparte drummed lightly with his fingers on the table. “You will understand, M. Achilles, that I hear nothing of such a plan, because I war like a gentleman.”

“That is not possible,” said Achilles of Ceos. “But I understand you. You like to pretend, you men of the West. Well, suppose Providence were to take away the Captain Smith to Smyrna market, would Bonaparte be willing to unite with—Providence?”

“That is a strange word you are so fond of, M. Achilles—‘unite.’”

“You men of the West have no wits. Unite—what could it mean? It means this: let my blood run with yours in the veins of your children.”

“The devil!” The exclamation was forced from Bonaparte’s not easily startled lips.

“Why invoke him?” said Achilles coolly. “We are enough by ourselves. Look you, Bonaparte, it is quite simple. A man has nothing in life greater than his children. In them he proves his power to those that never knew him. In them he is immortal. I have a daughter of age to wed. I want her children to be as great as I am. Save myself, I have heard of no greater man than you, Bonaparte. Do you wed Iris, and I will help you with all my power. Iris is worthy of me—worthy, then, of you. She has heard of your deeds and is ready to honour you as much as a man needs. She loves heroes. Of course, I am her father. Wed her, then, and our children shall hold the throne of the East. Who knows? Of the world!”

“It is flattering, M. Achilles. But I am wed already.”

“To a barren wife,” said Achilles coolly. Bonaparte’s brow darkened and lowered. “Well, kill her. Or put her away. Why not? You are not Christians in France now. I do not care what you do with her. Only mark this, I will have you wed Iris as I wed her mother—you shall own her for wife before all your

captains ere I take the Captain Smith away from Acre. So it shall be, Bonaparte. I will capture the Captain Smith. I will put him aboard my felucca. Then I will come ashore and see you take Iris for wife. Do so—and it is well. I send him off to Smyrna. I am your ally in blood always. Do not so—I give the Captain back to the Turk to fight you, and I fight on his side.”

“You are very lucid, M. Achilles,” said Bonaparte, and set the trenchant light of his grey eyes on the Greek’s face. . . . His crafty Corsican brain considered the affair. The Greek was right enough. Captain Smith was the heart of the defence. Without him Acre would fall as easily as Alexandria or Jaffa. . . . To be rid of him would be worth the world. . . . The price mattered nothing. The girl mattered nothing. He could call her wife before Marmont and Berthier and the rest, and they would laugh at the jest with him. . . . But this Greek pirate, her father, was he a man of deeds or words? . . . Bonaparte was a connoisseur of men. “Well, Achilles, my friend,” said he, “am I to see the lady before I wed her?”

“This hour, if you will, my son,” quoth Achilles of Ceos.

“You are certainly expeditious,” Bonaparte agreed. “But wait. Will you tell me what there is to prevent you from going now to Captain Smith and blabbing all this fine plan to him for a price?”

“If I were a man of the West,” said Achilles of Ceos, “I should talk about honour, and go and be a traitor. I have no honour, Bonaparte. But I will give you a pledge. I will leave Iris in your camp as hostage.”

“It would give us the savour of a wooing,” said Bona-



parte. "Though whether she is to do the wooing, or I, I do not clearly know."

"Bonaparte, my son," said Achilles of Ceos, "do not jest about my daughter."

"I am sure she is no jesting matter," Bonaparte agreed. "Well, let me see her. Conduct M. Achilles, Jean."

Jean Dortan, with a face expressive of deep disgust, led Achilles of Ceos out.

They brought back a girl dressed like her father in short full kilts, a slim girl of fine Athenian features and great dark eyes. Her hair hung down in two heavy braids of glossy black. She looked at Bonaparte with a man's full frank gaze, looked long . . . then "My lord is little," she said quietly, "but of a great soul. I would have it so."

"Do not love me too madly," said Bonaparte, with a sneer.

"You will be loved, my son, as you deserve. Every man is, at the last," said Achilles of Ceos. "Iris! You understand? You are a while——"

The quaint gravity of the girl's face broke in a delicious smile. "To be hostage for my father with my lord—it is so easy, it is so pleasant."

"*A bientôt*, Bonaparte, my son. Iris, remember that you are the daughter of Achilles of Ceos." And Achilles of Ceos was gone to the night.

Bonaparte found the girl looking at him again with frank wide eyes. "If it please my lord," she said quietly, "and if I find favour in the sight of my lord, I will be the most faithful of his slaves."

"Go to bed," growled Bonaparte, and turned to Jean Dortan. "Jean, let her have Bourrienne's tent. See

that she has all she needs. Bid Berthier put a sentry over her; go."

"I give you good-night, my lord," said the girl gently.

Bonaparte grunted.

A while after Jean Dortan came back. With an air of high disapproval he began the last of his daily tasks—to make Bonaparte's papers tidy. "Well?" Bonaparte inquired.

"It is not well," Jean Dortan grunted. "It is not fair. She means it."

Bonaparte laughed.

"When you laugh you are most like a devil," said Jean Dortan.

Bonaparte strode out of the tent. In the black dome of the Syrian night the moon hung full and golden. Violet masses with a crest of opal, the mountains stood about him, and below, like a cloud of silver dust, the death mist hid the river. . . . In the stillness Bonaparte considered life, and the end of life. . . . He was a childless man. His soul and the force of it had no heirs. Alone in life, he must die alone, and body and soul pass barren into nothingness. But he could seek no new life in Josephine's stead. He had known love once. He had given all to a fool. No better cure of love than that. He would not be able to love again. He was glad of it—till he remembered his mother, the grave-eyed woman, with passion and will like his own. . . . But, more than the love of a woman, he needed the love of men. Not their cheers, their praise, their worship: all that he had at call, and all of it left him hungry. What man of all the myriads who wondered and trembled and adored had a friend's love of him?

There might be one, the bluff Dauphiny blacksmith who had known him from a lad, Jean Dortan. He needed Jean Dortan more than Jean Dortan ever knew. . . . There was no force in the world to stand against him. He might beat down all, and rule all, and hold all men the slaves of his will. So he would stand over a conquered world, miserable in loneliness. . . . How to make men give more than fear—that was the riddle of his life. And while he strove for the answer in vain, he saw the moon rise high over Galilee. . . .

From his first sleep he was woke to hear that an army of Turks was coming upon him by the great road past Nazareth. He bade Kléber march at dawn to meet them. At dawn he was up to see the division away. When he came back to his tent he found the Greek girl there already.

“I give you good-morning, my lord.”

Bonaparte was in a good temper. His soldiers had been cheering him. He found her old-fashioned French pleasing, and her voice musical. He patted her shoulder. “Well, child, and what is your need?”

“My need is to serve you, my lord.”

“There is no happiness in serving, Iris.”

Iris laughed happily. “That is the wisdom of men, my lord.”

“You like to have no will of your own, child?”

“My will is to do your will, my lord. And that is my life.”

“A slave’s life, Iris.”

Again Iris laughed. “You are in fulness a man, my lord. Even my father is not more. That is why I desire to serve you.”

“There is one wife serves me already.”

Iris was slightly interested. Her deep dark eyes opened wider. "Truly, my lord? Why is she not here?"

Bonaparte gave a wry smile. The notion of Josephine giving her luxurious self the pain of even one night under canvas was amusing. "She does not love war," he explained. "She likes to stay at home."

"I would have her whipped!" Iris cried. "Indeed, my lord, but what is she for, there at home?"

"I am not quite sure," Bonaparte muttered, half to himself. Then aloud: "It is not the fashion for wives in France to go to war."

"There will be a new fashion when I am your wife, my lord," said Iris, with entire composure.

Bonaparte looked at the fine grave face, frank as a man's and bold, those eyes dark with the mystery of womanhood. "You want to be my wife, Iris?"

"Surely, my lord." She smiled at him. "What woman would not? You are of such power. Your soul is so manly. Indeed, I am blessed among women. And I will give you all that woman can, my lord. Only trust me."

Bonaparte turned sharply away. It stung, that "only trust me." "Get to your own tent," he growled, and she went out obediently. He crushed his hat down over his eyes and strode out.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was close on noon when a lancer came thundering into camp to tell that the Turks were thirty thousand, and Kléber near overwhelmed. In half an hour Bonaparte had another division on march. He stood by the door of his tent giving curt orders to Marmont,

who had a map in his hand. Then Marmont mounted and rode off to take a battery of galloper guns, and a regiment of cuirassiers by another road. Bonaparte mounted his white charger, and followed the main body.

Iris watched him with glowing eyes. Then she strode out of her tent looking all ways for a horse. She found Jean Dortan saddling his big-boned roan. "One for me too," she said simply.

"And what would you be after, mademoiselle?"

"I want to follow my lord. Oh, I see. There!" Between a gap of the tents she saw the officers' horse lines. Before Jean Dortan, hauling his reluctant steed after him, had caught her up, she had a horse free of heel ropes and bridled, and was astride his bare back and away. "Name of a little dog!" Jean Dortan exclaimed, and hurriedly fixed girths and lumbered after her.

She was wholly at her ease without a saddle; she laughed back at him, and for a while would not let him catch her. When he did get level, "Fie, mademoiselle!" says he, "this is against all order. You must back."

"I am going to see my lord lead the fight," said Iris calmly.

Jean Dortan looked at the eager face with some admiration. Except for force—and he was not the man to use force on a girl—there was nothing for it but to let her go on. "Promise you will not run into danger," he insisted.

"Indeed I would not so wrong my lord," Iris cried.

It was Jean Dortan's custom to ride by Bonaparte's side in battle, his guard. But now he stayed with Iris. So he seemed to be guarding Bonaparte's hon-

our. Together they followed the cloud of dust eastward across the plain, sparing their horses, drawing slowly nearer. Jean Dortan dropped behind her a little. While he watched her lithe grace he was puzzling his brain. "I wish I knew what to wish," he muttered.

Over the green wheatfields they went till the mountains were near and, above them, amid bare rock, pine and wild olive were dark against the sky. Then by a pass in the crags that keep ward over Nazareth, and out through purple thistle and golden broom and honeysuckle and white convolvulus bells, they came to look over the plain where the mass of Tabor rises lonely to the sky, where Barak and the highlanders of Galilee smote down Sisera's host.

The air was heavy with the din of battle. A cloud of wild soldiery encompassed Kléber's stubborn regiments, twelve men to one, and stormed at them charge upon charge. Bonaparte's division had halted far off. Jean Dortan gripped Iris's bridle and they waited on the high ground watching. Bonaparte's division broke from column of route into three squares and marched on swiftly. Upon them rushed the Turkish horsemen. They halted and shattered the charge with volleys, and marched on again. Now all the Turkish army drew away from Kléber to hurl itself on Bonaparte's squares. The three squares were flung together, and though it bore the shock of a force six times its own, that strong fence of steel stood fast. While the Turks drew back in disorder Kléber coming upon their flank smote them with volley after volley. It was enough. They fled, the whole great army fled from the few, fled disorderly

to the mountains. But as they surged up the slopes the valley mouths vomited flame. Marmont had been in time. His guns beat them back, and, as they fled again, he hurled cuirassiers at them. The while, Bonaparte and Kléber had closed upon their rear, and, hemmed about with a ring of fire while heavy mailed horsemen raged in the midst, that army was hammered to powder. When the sun lay close upon the western horizon there was but one army on the plain of Esdraelon. Bonaparte had crushed thirty thousand men with five thousand. They began to gather the French wounded—there were but few—and he and his staff rode off the field.

Then Iris urged her horse forward and galloped to his side, crying out, "My lord, my lord, how great you are!" Her cheeks were flushed, her braids of hair floated behind her.

Some of Bonaparte's officers chuckled. Bonaparte turned in his saddle. "Some gentleman has the good fortune to be amused," he said ominously. "I shall be glad to hear the jest." No gentleman volunteered to explain.

Then he rode forward a little with her. "You should not have come, child," he said gently enough. Her eyes grew sad. "May I not see your great deeds ever, my lord?" she asked anxiously. "Indeed, my lord, they are my glory."

Bonaparte looked at her, and a strange melancholy transformed his face. . . . He was at a loss for words. . . . "Ride on, child," he muttered. Obediently she urged her horse ahead. Bonaparte followed slowly, his chin on his breast. . . . He was aware of Jean Dortan beside him.

“Why did you let her come?” he growled.

Jean Dortan shrugged. “What to do? She means it very much,” said he.

Bonaparte shifted in his saddle. It was the sum of his own thought. “What to do? She means it very much.” Why, cheat her as he had meant to cheat her. What matter more for breaking her than for any one of the thousands who were crushed to make a path to power? But she appealed strangely. “What to do?” He was yearning for the impossible—that she had come to his life while he could welcome her.

That night they rested in the Convent of Nazareth, and his officers dared not laugh when the prior told them the story of the Annunciation, for Bonaparte was strangely grave.

But the victory of a stricken field helped him nothing to win Acre. Still the tottering walls of “the mud-hole” mocked him. Still Captain Sidney Smith countermined his mines and foiled his assaults. The hot-headed bombastic sailor had a brain most resourceful and a will hard as Napoléon’s own. “By all the rules of war,” he wrote to my Lord Nelson, “this town is not and never has been defensible. Nevertheless, it can and shall be defended.” He fought with all the engines of war of all the ages. He had blazing pitch for a storming party, and stink-pots, and when Bonaparte’s engineers mined beneath his northern bastion he smoked them out with burning sulphur.

Bonaparte was in sore straits. Hundreds of his little army had fallen vainly about the walls, and the pestilence of the marsh had slain more than shot and steel, and every day the death-roll was heavier. His men began to murmur. How many more must die for



the mud-hole's sake? And powder was failing, and food. He saw defeat near, and strove with desperate energy for the honour of his fame, for his hope of power. But he could not make powder of the air, nor food, and again and again when he came back to his tent at dusk he was near despair.

There was Iris. She wasted quaint womanly care upon his tent. She had always a glad smile for him and brave confident words if he chose to talk. She sat with him of nights, well content to be silent if he were silent, happy in his mere presence. She was calmly sure of her place. More than once Bonaparte looked up from his maps and figures to consider her with cold judicial eyes. Surely she was all of a wife that a man need want. With sardonic smile he compared her wise all-giving love to the fribble Josephine. But he wanted one no more than the other. For Iris he had a decent brotherly affection. Well! It would serve. It was enough to cheat her with.

To cheat her was necessary. Achilles of Ceos was not the man to let him off his bargain. Achilles of Ceos would never take Sidney Smith away without seeing Iris in Bonaparte's arms. Unless Sidney Smith were removed, and quickly, Bonaparte had no hope of taking Acre. In the interests of his fame, it was plainly necessary to cheat the girl. So he resolved to take her to wife for a while. . . . Perhaps he might keep her. It would be easy enough to be rid of Josephine. A divorce or so was little matter in France. . . . The child was well enough. He might sham love to the end. She deserved some consideration.

Achilles of Ceos had not put himself in a hurry. He thought it desirable that Bonaparte should discover

how very sorely he needed the help of Achilles of Ceos. The mere problem of removing Captain Sidney Smith presented no great difficulty to Achilles' mind. He had, I suppose, more experience in kidnapping than any man of his age. His method on this occasion was somewhat ingenious. One dark night, when Captain Sidney Smith's galley was taking him out to his ship, Achilles of Ceos, in a well-manned pinnace, was rowing stroke for stroke with the English, hardly an oar's length away. A yawl loomed up in the dark and, infamously handled, ran the galley down. She did not wait to save the crew, but put her helm up and stood out to sea, pursued by spluttering English execrations. Achilles of Ceos was much more charitable. The galley had hardly sunk before his boat was amid the swimming, swearing English. He had Captain Sidney Smith by the collar, he handed him inboard with one skilful effort, and if it happened that Captain Smith hit a stretcher with his temple and lost his senses that was plainly no fault of Achilles the humane. Captain Sidney Smith was thrust swiftly forward and hidden under a tarpaulin while Achilles of Ceos continued to rescue the perishing. In a few minutes he had the whole crew in his stern-sheets.

Then his anxiety in broken English to know if all were saved was edifying. They numbered themselves, and "God bless my eyes," says the coxswain to the midshipman of the boat, "God bless my eyes, Mr. Jenkins, where be the captain?" Captain Sidney Smith, who was not merely insensible but by this time neatly bound and gagged beneath his tarpaulin, naturally did not reply. Mr. Jenkins only replied with execrations.

"How is it?" said Achilles of Ceos, with much con-

cern. "It is your capitaine, is it not, eh?" They told him with fervour, and fervently abused the yawl. Achilles of Ceos, whose orders that craft had admirably obeyed, sympathised with them heartily. He was first to suggest that they should row up and down searching for the lost captain, and he had lanterns lit, and they rowed to and fro shouting. Captain Sidney Smith, as you know, had the best reasons for not answering.

At last, "It's blessed good of you," said the midshipman unsteadily, "but it's no blessed good."

"Split me," muttered the coxswain, "split me if I thought he would drown," and ended with something like a groan.

Exhibiting a decent appearance of sorrow, Achilles of Ceos bade his men row on to Captain Smith's ship, and there he put his rescued English on board and received with becoming modesty the compliments due to their saviour. Then he went off to his own felucca. Captain Sidney Smith—he had recovered enough to wriggle desperately—was hoisted aboard, deposited in a cabin below the water line and freed from his tighter bonds and the gag. Of his remarks upon the subject there exists unfortunately no record.

Achilles of Ceos slept the sleep of a mind conscious of rectitude, and two hours after dawn went ashore to see his bargain with Bonaparte performed.

Bonaparte was reading the grim figures of the hospital reports when they came to tell him that Achilles of Ceos was at the outposts. . . . A medley of feeling chased through him; new hope . . . and exultation . . . and something of regret for Iris. . . . He turned from all that to seize the chance of action. Now was the time to break his bargain. Since Captain Sidney

Smith was removed, nothing could stay the storming of the town. Off went Berthier in a hurry to bid Lannes make ready to assault by the north-eastern tower. Achilles of Ceos was to be kept waiting at the outposts till the deed was done. Then, with Acre captured, Bonaparte proposed to laugh at the good Achilles of Ceos and pack him off with his daughter. So the Corsican saw himself getting all he wanted unencumbered with the girl whose love of him made her intolerable.

But Achilles of Ceos was not a fool. He heard the drums, he saw the grenadiers running to the muster, and he understood. Out of his kilt he pulled a tablet of ivory and on it in his stiff hand wrote this:

BONAPARTE—

Unless I am aboard my felucca again in an hour my slaves will put the captain ashore free. Do not forget, my son, that I am

ACHILLES OF CEOS.

An orderly brought it in haste to Bonaparte's tent. Bonaparte read it and the muscles stood in his lean dark face. Achilles of Ceos had him fast. Glory, ambition, could not be denied. Acre he must have. There was no way but this. . . . Why then, God help her, he would do it! He would call the girl wife, and cheat her to the end. . . . He stalked to and fro a moment, his brow lowering, his close lips pale. Jean Dortan watched him in some surprise. "Bid the Greek here," he growled over his shoulder; then with a shout, "Swiftly, man, swiftly!"

Achilles of Ceos came. "Bonaparte, my son," he

said with a smile, "I fear you forget that Achilles of Ceos will always be able to look after his own."

Bonaparte met his eye. "If I were to tell you that I honour your daughter too much to love her, what would you say?"

"I should laugh at you," said Achilles of Ceos. "What, Bonaparte! If I make you Emperor of the World, shall I let my daughter be less than empress? Not I, by heaven! Empress she shall be, and the children of my blood the world's heirs. Enough. Time is short already. Call your captains. Own her for wife. Else you lose all."

Bonaparte flung out his arm in a gesture of something like despair. "Else you lose all!" There was no other way. Ambition drove. "Bid Berthier come and Marmont and Savary and Bessières," he cried to Jean Dortan, then turned to Achilles again. "Does it suffice? I am not used to your pirates' weddings."

"Let pirates wed pirates' way," quoth Achilles, with a laugh. "Where is the child?"

Bonaparte pointed without a word to Iris's tent, and, while her father went in, strode to and fro, striking his heels hard upon the rock. He had never liked himself less.

Berthier and the rest came and stood together a little apart from him, oppressed with wonder. But no one of them dared speak. The gaunt dark brow was in torment.

Achilles of Ceos came leading his daughter. Her fine pure face was glorious in joy. Bonaparte stood suddenly still and gazed, his grim stark misery against her gladness, the cold grey strength of his eyes against hers and their deep dark mystery of love. The joy of

her faded. "Is my lord not well?" she cried anxiously, and was more lovely in sorrow.

"It is well enough with me," growled Bonaparte.

"Captains all!" cried Achilles of Ceos, "Bonaparte bids you here that you may see him own my daughter for wife. Is it not so, Bonaparte, my son?"

The captains crowded together and nudged and muttered, but "It is so," said Bonaparte in a low voice.

"Come, then." He led his daughter by the hand. "Before my captains (say it after me, my son)——"

And Bonaparte spoke: "Before my captains . . . I take Iris of Ceos . . . to be my wife . . . till death. . . . That is my will."

Blundering over the words, Bonaparte made an end. He was staring down at the ground. Iris put out her hand and took his. At the touch of her he looked up. He saw the wonder of her deep dark eyes, the gladness of her soul. . . . He who was cheating her, he who cared nothing and gave nothing, he felt her love's generous majesty. . . . He knew shame. . . . The giant ambition in him shrivelled. . . . Fortune and glory and power, all that might go down the wind. . . . He had to be true. . . . He flung her hand away, he started back. "No, by God, I cannot!" he cried hoarsely.

Iris gave a moan of pain.

Achilles of Ceos, crimson with fury, yelled: "Is it you shall put my child to shame?" and sprang at him, drawing his sword.

But even as the blow fell, for Bonaparte waited it, Iris darted between, and the point was home in her side. By that Jean Dortan had Achilles' neck in his great hands and jerked the man back, and Berthier,

running up, clove his head to the eyes. He fell down, and breathed no more.

Iris lay in her blood, fainting and white. One moment Bonaparte gazed down at her with hard, unfaltering eyes. Then he turned away. "Savary, bid Lannes to the assault at once. Tell him to spare nothing. I want to do something to-day. I will see who will fight for me." And off he strode.

Berthier and Marmont and Bessières looked at each other strangely as they followed.

But Jean Dortan gathered Iris in his arms and bore her away to the hospital.

Lannes was ready with his grenadiers. Bonaparte rode out before them, and his bronze voice rang: "Soldiers! To you I commit the honour of France! This hour you must plant the tricolour on the walls of Acre—our tricolour that knows not how to retreat. Soldiers! now is the day of glory. For France! Forward!"

Without one cannon shot to warn English and Turk, he launched them on the north-eastern bastion.

The Albanian riflemen rent their ranks, but still they pressed on to the foot of the crumbling ramparts, and up and up, clutching pike and scimitar with their naked hands. The dry moat was full of the dead, the ramparts were sodden in blood, and still the Frenchmen strove up and up, till the tricolour was planted firm. The bastion was won. Then down into the street they plunged, while the Turks fought desperately as the Turk will at bay.

But Achilles of Ceos had been provident. The boat that brought him ashore waited just one hour, and then, as Achilles had bidden, went back to the felucca

to set Captain Sidney Smith free. They gagged him again, and bound him neatly, and did him up in a carpet. So they put him, a tidy bundle, on the quay at Acre, and remarking that it was a piece of goods from Achilles of Ceos for Captain Sidney Smith, they rowed swiftly back to their felucca. The Turks on the quay poked this strange merchandise about to see if any part of it could be stolen. It grunted strangely. They undid it, and behold, the gift to Captain Sidney Smith was Captain Sidney Smith himself. First they salaamed to him profoundly, which must have been very trying to his feelings; then they took off his bonds, and last of all they removed his gag. Captain Sidney Smith said just what he thought.

Meanwhile, if the matter interests you, the felucca of Achilles of Ceos had her anchor aboard, and stood out to sea. At nightfall she crept unseen in-shore, and two boats' crews went to look for Achilles. They heard of his death. They murdered some two or three score French to pay the blood debt. Then they went aboard again, and made sail for Ceos.

Captain Sidney Smith had hurried to the fight. Ere he came the French were in. By all the rules of war the town was taken. Captain Sidney Smith never obeyed any rules. He signalled to his ships in the offing for every man they could spare with pike and cutlass. Then he began to make the Turks retreat, slowly, difficulty, foot by foot, toward the pacha's palace. He filled that with riflemen. He heated huge cauldrons of pitch. The Turks fled into the palace. After them came the French on and on, surging into the courtyard. Only a few shots gave them challenge. The French filled the courtyard, hammered at the



doors, swarmed up to the windows. Then from a dozen places poured a stream of molten pitch. Some were scalded and yelled in agony, tearing at their seared flesh. All fell back. Still the cataracts of pitch poured down. It fell upon the stones and spread a warm black flood beneath the feet of the French. They were stamping about trying to free themselves from the clog of it when every window of the palace vomited lead. The French were trapped. They could only stagger in flight, for the cooling pitch held them and slewed them. While they raved in impotent fury the Albanian riflemen shot them down. . . .

Upon the remnant beyond in the street fell the English sailors, and hurled them away as the wind drives an April cloud. Kléber's men coming to their support, were overwhelmed in the mad rush of the fight. Away to the walls and out they were driven, losing terribly. Of all that brave division only a few broken bleeding men bore their wounded general back. . . .

Bonaparte saw it and knew defeat. The half of his army was gone. There in the blaze of sunlight he sat his horse, gazing at the walls that had mocked him, those wet crimson walls. As he rode off his chin fell down on his breast. Captain Sidney Smith had climbed to the bastion and stood there laughing while he wiped his hands on the French flag.

It was all over. Not at Acre was Bonaparte to seize the key of the world. Not in the East was he to found his empire. He knew it and faced the fact. There was only one thing possible—retreat. Another assault, a few days more in the poisonous vapours of the marsh would leave him with an army of the dead. He made up his mind in a moment. He made his plans in an hour.

At midnight the army would march. Every man was to go afoot. The horses were for such of the wounded as could ride. For those who could not—he spoke with his surgeon-general Glandasse. “The army is falling back, Glandasse. Some of your wounded are not fit to ride.”

“Many, my general.”

“I am not content that they should be tortured or enslaved by the Turks. You will arrange it, Glandasse.”

“But I do not understand, my general.”

“Fool! fool!” Bonaparte started up in a passion. “Is it not your trade to make death easy?”

The surgeon drew back. “It is my trade to save life, not destroy it.”

Bonaparte cursed him passionately. “It is your trade to obey orders, rascal. Obey, or I will have you shot. Understand me, Glandasse. Obey or die. I will have no Frenchman slave to the Turk to spare your sentiments.”

The surgeon was pale. “You—you mean a drug, my general?” he stammered.

“I mean a kindly death. See to it.”

“There is—there is the Greek girl, my general. She could not ride.”

“It is the better for her,” said Bonaparte coldly; and at that the surgeon fairly fled from him.

All day long Iris had lain in the hospital tent, still, listless, scarce alive, bereft of all hope, yearning, yearning for death. The surgeon who brought her the opium draught had tears in his eyes. But she did not see that. . . .

Jean Dortan, who had hunted the camp through for

a delicate meal for her, found her white and still in death. They told him how, and he broke out in blasphemy. . . . He plunged into the tent where Bonaparte sat drawing up the order of march. "Am I to serve a poisoner of women?" he cried.

Bonaparte looked up and his eyes were weary. "You have seen her, then?" he asked eagerly. Jean Dortan poured out violent, incoherent abuse. "You are a little moved, my dear Jean," said Bonaparte. "You are also a little foolish. I am to blame—for being too kind to her. If I had been willing to cheat her she might be alive. If I were willing to leave her for a slave of the Turk she might be alive. Eh!" He shrugged his shoulders. "I think she should thank me, wherever she is."

"I thank God I am not you," cried Jean Dortan.

"It is devout if superfluous," said Bonaparte; and as Jean was flinging away with an oath, "Jean! Tell me! Did she look happy?" he cried.

"Happier than you ever will be," growled Jean Dortan.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dawn was breaking over the mountains of Galilee, and the rosy light woke the sea as the little weary army toiled up the long dark ridge of Carmel. Bonaparte strode in the van alone. Already new schemes were formed in that greedy brain. He would go back to France and snatch power from the weak hands of Tallien and Barras and the rest, make himself lord of France and her teeming fields, fashion of Frenchmen a weapon that should beat down the nations till he stood Emperor of the West. . . . And still, as the sun rose higher and the Syrian dawn was clothed in splendour,

amethyst and crimson and orange away to the violet sea, he yearned for the hope he had lost, that vast Empire in the Orient. He scorned himself for his weakness of yesterday. One lie the more, and he had conquered. Fool, fool, fool, that could not cheat a girl's eyes! The grim brow lowered, his dark cheek quivered, he muttered to himself, "I failed my fortune! Yes, I failed my fortune there."

## CHAPTER XI

### HOW HE WON HIS THRONE

FRANCE was ill. Every Frenchman was agreed upon that. The violent surgery of the Revolution had inflamed her. She shook in spasms of the disease of discontent. The south and west had begun revolutions against the Revolution. The peasants were for abolishing Paris, Paris for ravaging the countryside. In the blessed names of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, each man prayed for the ruin of his neighbour. A Directory of gluttons and a Council of fools could not stay them. Certainly France was ill. There were many prescriptions for her.

The Abbé Sieyès offered her a constitution or so. La Réveillère-Lépeaux had made her a new religion, and was hurt because she would not embrace it. He complained to all who would listen. It was the Foreign Minister, the Citizen Talleyrand, who gave him sympathy. "You want your religion believed, my friend? Nothing is easier. Get yourself crucified and rise again in three days." Then the poor La Réveillère asked him to explain.

The Citizen Talleyrand had not much doubt what France needed, and he was looking for neither constitution nor religion. His eyes were upon a young general who had conquered Italy and was making some noise in the Orient. The General Bonaparte's dispatches roared of victory and success and wealth, but

the Citizen Talleyrand, who was not hampered by an excessive faith in other men's words, and had a good eye for facts, made ready to have him back in France.

In the early autumn a pair of frigates stole into the harbour of Fréjus, and the Conqueror of the East—whom the greatest luck had hardly saved from an English prison—was back in France to gamble for power. The people believed in him. He was welcomed as if he had brought the treasures of Asia with him and not left his army behind. France was a dozen years from knowing him yet.

The Citizeness Bonaparte was not at home for him. She had left the little house of the Rue Chantereine for her dear Château La Malmaison. There you see Josephine in the late summer of her womanhood, a glowing vision of pleasure, amuse herself and Captain Barsac of the 3rd Hussars. Captain Barsac is agreeable to her temper, for he does not pretend to be in earnest too earnestly.

Captain Barsac, a lean, lusty fellow, leant over Josephine's couch half-affectionate, half-mocking, as a man might be to a comely child. "Beyond doubt, citizeness," says he, "you are the most charming woman in the world—to look at."

"I hate compliments with thorns," she pouted. Her white arm went behind her head as she lay back. "Do you only want to look, Captain Barsac?" and her eyes were gay.

Barsac laughed: "If I did more than look you would hate me. Faith, I believe there never was a man to whom you wanted to give more than a look. Eh, citizeness, how much more had you for Bonaparte?"

There was a faint flush in Josephine's ivory cheek,

but her eyes smiled and her lips. "If you were he you might know, sir. And though I mean to give you no more than a look, is that a reason I should not like you to want more?"

"How much of you am I to want, citizeness?" Barsac asked obediently.

"You are not sure?"

"But absolutely," cried Barsac. "I want the vision of you—you, the perfect body of womanhood—Venus of 1799. And on my soul no more than the vision. Oh, but I adore you——"

An oath exploded. Captain Barsac turned. In the doorway stood a mean little man in a faded grey coat, swearing . . . swearing. . . .

"A gentleman who has left his manners in the hall," said Captain Barsac, and marched on him.

"Napoléon!" cried Josephine, and ran, holding out her white arms.

Captain Barsac clicked his heels and stood to attention. "My apologies, general. I did not recognise you as a husband."

Bonaparte put Josephine aside and strode up to Barsac. "Your name and regiment, sir?"

"Barsac, Captain. Of the 3rd Hussars," quoth Barsac. Then, with gay insolence: "And am I to hear from you as general or gentleman?"

"Go to your quarters, sir," Bonaparte snarled.

"In good time. First let me finish my sentence. I was saying, citizeness," he turned to Josephine, "that I adore you—as one adores a picture by the Citizen David. You awake the same emotions. General, my felicitations. Citizeness, your servitor. Good night." Captain Barsac swaggered out.

Bonaparte faced round on his wife scowling: "Will you never learn any shame?"

Josephine was ready with tears. "I did not know you were coming," she sobbed. "And he is nothing—really nothing."

"If he were more, you would not care for him nor he for you."

"He does not. And you are very unkind," Josephine wailed. "You have been away so long, and you only come back to scold me."

Bonaparte swore again. "Understand me, Josephine. I give you nothing, for that you deserve. I ask nothing of you, for you have nothing to give. But if you disgrace me, I have done with you. You will go."

Josephine wept prettily. . . . She was not tired of it yet when a maid knocked to announce the Citizen Talleyrand. Bonaparte's grim scorn faded in a thoughtful smile. Josephine bade the maid wait, darted to the mirror and abolished all her tears in a moment, and decked herself with neatness and smiles.

His iron boot thudding heavily, the Citizen Talleyrand limped into the room. Josephine came to meet him in graceful haste and set him a low chair. "The citizeness is always kind," said he, in a deep level voice. "How I envy you, general!" and his light blue eyes turned swift upon Bonaparte.

"It is probable," said Bonaparte, "that Talleyrand did not come from Paris to talk of my wife."

"If her husband were not here it would be a pleasure," said Talleyrand, and his pale lips smiled at Josephine.

"Oh, but you are always wicked!" she laughed.



“Go, Josephine,” said Bonaparte sharply, and she went in a hurry.

Talleyrand’s smile remained. “In fact,” said he, “I came to congratulate the Conqueror of the East on his self-denial in leaving his conquests for this poor country of France.”

Bonaparte examined him intently. The sneer was in the thought rather than the tone or the pallid impassive face. Bonaparte gave challenge at once. “It amuses you to be sarcastic, citizen,” he said coldly.

“Yes; I propose to be sincere,” said Talleyrand. “I have an affection for the Citizen Talleyrand and something of a kindness for France. Neither is very well just now. I do not suspect you of a weakness for anything but Bonaparte. If he has the wit he might serve himself best in serving France.” He lay back, straightening his lame leg painfully, and studied Bonaparte’s eyes.

“Explain yourself, citizen,” said Bonaparte innocently.

“I think too well of your wits,” quoth Talleyrand.

Bonaparte spent some moments searching his face. Talleyrand’s eyes gave back a dull, cold stare. “It seems, citizen,” said Bonaparte, “that we understand each other well enough not to trust each other?”

“It is the way of fools. I thought you were not one, general.”

“The Citizen Talleyrand wants me to talk treason. It is a compliment. He must think me worth betraying.”

Talleyrand yawned. “You have no originality. If I wanted you destroyed I would persuade the Directory to shoot you as a deserter. Bernadotte talks of it

already. I suppose you deserve it. You have left your miserable army in Egypt to destruction. But I am not a pedant. I want the day's work done. You can be some use to France."

"In making the Citizen Talleyrand her dictator?" Bonaparte sneered.

Talleyrand put up one heavy shoulder till his short neck was altogether lost. "I was not born to rule. I have not the mind or"—he looked with contempt at his withered leg—"the body. But I do not like to serve fools. . . . Bah! this is tedious, general. Why are you back but to make yourself master of France? Perhaps you have a way of your own. You will waste less blood if you work with a—statesman."

"I am a soldier."

"In grain. It will always be against you. But you are the best fortune France can find. I am willing to help you."

"Forgive me, citizen, if I wonder how you can."

"I know you can do without me. I know I cannot do without you. You are ready for the blood of a civil war. Well, I am not. It is waste."

That note rang to Bonaparte's heart. Prodigious at need of the lives and work of men, he was governed as yet by the sane hatred of spending in vain. "What is your plan?" he said sharply.

"A constitution," said Talleyrand.

"An imbecility!"

"It is imbeciles who people the world and fight for you. You must please the imbeciles. That is the secret of government. There is Sieyès—if you fill him to the neck with gold he will draw a new constitution for you—a constitution decorated with a chief magistrate.

We will make a party of reform in the Council. There is your brother Lucien, who is fool enough to be a sincere republican. You can impose upon him and he upon respectability. Let him carry our reform. You will be chief magistrate of the Republic. From that it is an easy step to something else."

"I see a weakness," said Bonaparte.

"I see a thousand."

"Whether I go your way or my own, I must have troops."

"Oh, if you are afraid——" sneered Talleyrand.

"Precisely. I am afraid. There are brigades at St. Cloud. I must have them."

Talleyrand shrugged. "Tell your brother Lucien that the State cannot leave General Bonaparte without a command. So devoted an adherent of the Republic—it would be indecent. He must have the Army of Paris."

"That first," said Bonaparte sharply.

"It is easy. The next difficulty is greater."

"When one has troops——" Bonaparte began.

"One has not secured the Citizen Fouché."

"A chief of police," Bonaparte sneered.

"An artist in crime. It is the only wise thing I know of our rulers, that they pay Fouché well. If he sees that you or I have become dangerous, we shall quietly expire."

"He is doubtless for sale."

"I have not the money. It will be wise to remain obscure from the Citizen Fouché till we are in a position to make him fear a little."

Bonaparte smiled. The economical spirit pleased him. "So much for Fouché," he said. "And what is

the price of the Citizen Talleyrand's ingenuity?"

"Let me be the minister of a ruler of France that has a brain."

"You are disinterested, citizen."

"I shall show you that I am not. I have no virtues, general. Only I cannot digest fools."

Bonaparte smiled. Before they parted he had engaged to meet Talleyrand on the morrow. But as Talleyrand's carriage rolled away back to Paris a pair of horsemen were following it from afar. Talleyrand had not made too much of the Citizen Fouché. The Citizen Fouché—he was the only force of that flabby, greedy Government. To kill the Directory—to abolish Barras and Gohier and Moulin—that was nothing for a man with wits and a regiment. But the Citizen Fouché was different—was as able as a knave can be. Greedy of cash, he loved the Directory and its lax order that fed him fat, as a drunkard loves a tavern.

Bonaparte, in spite of a protesting maid, had intruded himself into Josephine's room. She was at her ease in a cloud of lace—a picture of the charm of sex. Bonaparte could see that no more. He stood over her, cold and menacing. "We go back to Paris to-morrow, Josephine. You will at length behave as my wife." He did not wait to see her cry.

The next day he welcomed his brother Lucien, that austere republican, to the little house in the Rue Chantierine. He found Lucien convinced, like every honest man in France, that the times were out of joint, by no means convinced that he was the man to set them right. Bonaparte was sympathetic. He talked with his florid eloquence of the ideal republic. He inflamed Lucien's imagination. Till the cry broke out: "Napo-

léon! you were born to be the saviour of France." Then he was modestly shy. He sent the good Lucien away, sure that he was a noble republican hero, and he went to confer with Talleyrand. One of the Citizen Fouché's familiars followed him without ostentation.

In the like peaceful manner several days passed. Fouché watching keenly for a trace of sinister activity, found none, and hesitated to strike. It was the excellent Lucien who sprang a mine upon him. Urgent that the services of his heroic brother should not be lost to the State, Lucien set a good republican friend to move that General Bonaparte be appointed commander of the Army of Paris. None of the Council suspected more than Lucien himself. It was carried easily. The only army in France was put at Bonaparte's call. Then Fouché understood. He was no more a republican than Bonaparte himself; he cared no more for the Directory and the Council. But the government of fools suited him well; let him peculate and extort at will. He made ready to abolish Bonaparte.

Captain Barsac also was displeased with Bonaparte. It seemed to him that Bonaparte had been unreasonable, and Captain Barsac was not ready to encourage a man in being unreasonable about his wife. So he made a call upon Josephine in the Rue Chantierine. It was well for Bonaparte.

On that night Bonaparte went to Talleyrand's house to meet the sleek Abbé Sieyès. "The Citizen General," Talleyrand explained, after compliments, "longs to see a purer government in France."

"The Citizen General," said Sieyès, with enthusiasm, "is of Roman virtue." And perhaps he believed it. He

had a unique ability in self-deception. He believed in himself.

"I know the austere patriotism of the Citizen Sieyès," said Bonaparte, who knew that Talleyrand had been filling him with gold. "Therefore I turn to him, I appeal to him in the name of France, to devise with his unequalled powers a constitution worthy of her glory."

"That is the work of a genius," said Talleyrand, who knew that Sieyès was greedy of flattery as of money. "To put it into action is for rough men of affairs."

Sieyès coughed. He had been giving birth to constitutions since he began to shave, but he would not cheapen himself by being too facile. "It is indeed a matter of painful ratiocination. It calls for the exhaustion of the highest faculties of man. We have to preserve the sacred principles of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—to give the nation confidence in the plan of government——"

"And the executive full power," said Bonaparte sharply.

Sieyès scratched his shining nose. "That is no doubt desirable," said he.

"It is indispensable," said Bonaparte.

Sieyès looked at him thoughtfully—and remembered Talleyrand's gold. "But we have to preserve the glorious principles of the Revolution," said he.

"That," said Talleyrand suavely, "is why we appeal to you."

And Sieyès understood what was wanted—a mask for despotism. A constitution which would cheat republicans into thinking it republican, while it gave

Bonaparte freedom to use all France at his will. He was not ready to provide it cheaply. "But I must be assured," said he, "that no treason is meditated to holy liberty," and he looked Talleyrand full in the face.

Talleyrand put one hand in his pocket. He smiled. "I will give you every assurance, my dear Sieyès," and he made coins chink.

Sieyès flushed. It was annoying that Talleyrand should not think him of sufficient importance to be refined. He turned to Bonaparte, saw him smiling, coughed, and began in the tone of a professor. "In attempting to attain the ideal government, general," said he, "we should have always before our eyes the glorious example of ancient Rome. There was a perfect recognition of the rights of man—for every citizen, you must know, had the vote—we find that the officers they elected, the great officers of state, the consuls——" He broke off suddenly and looked anxiously at the window. There was some noise outside.

"Consul; it has a good republican sound," said Talleyrand, and he looked at Bonaparte. "Does General Bonaparte stand for the consulate?"

"Does consulate mean power?" said Bonaparte. "I must have power, power in peace and war. I——"

Sieyès, who had not listened to them, Sieyès, who had been straining to hear the noises of the street, started forward and crept to the window and peered out. They saw his sleek face go white.

"What is it, man?" said Bonaparte sharply.

Sieyès turned, and they saw his swollen eyes. "Gendarmes, Fouché's gendarmes," he said hoarsely.

Bonaparte pounced on the candles and put them out.

Then Talleyrand's level voice spoke out of the gloom. "Does it occur to you, general, that if you wished to draw attention to this room, you have done it?"

"Is there a way out?" Bonaparte hissed.

"A way out to the gendarmes," said Talleyrand calmly. "No other. You do not seem at your best in danger, general. I wonder if there is any." They heard him rise and limp to the window. . . . The noise in the street grew louder and louder. . . . "General, is your hand steady enough to light the candles?" said Talleyrand, and heard Bonaparte mutter an oath. "In his emotions our dear Sieyès has forgotten that Fouché generally provides each night an escort for the carriages of the keepers of the gambling hells. One carriage has broken down outside. They are going on now. That is all. . . ." He sneered at Bonaparte bungling with the candles. "I did not suspect you of being so amusing, general."

Bonaparte glared at him, and since it was the best thing to do, told the truth. "I am never at ease with the danger I do not know."

"I am your opposite," said Talleyrand. "The unknown stimulates me."

"We are not here to discuss tastes," said Bonaparte roughly; and turned to Sieyès, who had swiftly recovered his ease. "About these consuls!"

That night they hammered out in the rough the constitution that was to impose upon the earnest republicans of France. There were to be three consuls, the first of them supreme, the others his ministers. But every man in France was to have a vote in electing the senate, and the senate would choose the consuls. "The senate being quite free in its choice," said Sieyès.



“So long as it chooses right,” said Talleyrand, and even the respectable Sieyès allowed himself to smile. He was charged with the task of elaborating the republican beauties of the scheme, and they parted. The faithful Jean Dortan was roused from his sleep in the anteroom, called Bonaparte’s carriage and guarded him home. They were followed.

Captain Barsac, who had other ladies in Paris to visit, was a little late in calling on Josephine. He was told that the citizeness was not at home. “Assure her that she is, my dear,” said he to the maid, and came in. The splendours of his uniform and his body were spread over a couch when Josephine swam into the room.

“Oh, but you are wicked, and I cannot possibly receive you.”

Captain Barsac kissed her hands. “That is why I am here.”

“Napoléon will be furious.”

“I never permit husbands to interfere with me,” said Captain Barsac. “And your charms are multiplied by the gentleman’s jealousy.”

Josephine put out a white arm and fingered the buttons of Barsac’s coat. “But you do like me myself?” she asked, and looked up at him with a child’s longing in her dark eyes.

“Citizeness, I never knew a woman so much a woman and so little. I adore the child in you. The woman—humph!”

“What?” said Josephine, wrinkling her fair brow.

But a military oath and the roar of a bull rang in the street, and there was the scream of steel. Captain Barsac sprang to the window. “Name of a dog, the

Little Corporal!" said he, and plucked at his sword and leapt out.

Fouché, you remember, had made arrangements for Bonaparte. When Bonaparte's carriage drew up in the Rue Chantereine there was another carriage behind it. When Bonaparte stepped out on the causeway a ring of men gathered about him. Jean Dortan started forward from the door to buffet them aside. Then steel gleamed out in the dim light, and Bonaparte jumped back to his carriage, and Jean Dortan, head down like a bull, and like a bull roaring, plunged at the ring. Two he caught in his arms and dashed them on the stones, but the rest beat him down and swept over him upon Bonaparte, who from the shelter of the carriage defended himself ill enough while he yelled to the coachman to drive on. But they had beaten the coachman off the box, they held the reins, and three of them pressed Bonaparte hard. His sword was flickering feebly—he was beaten back to the farthest corner of the carriage—they were in the doorway shortening their swords.

"Engage, citizens!" a gay voice rang behind them, a white flash shot into one man's eye, recoiled, and sped to another heart. The third man leapt from the carriage, fell, staggered to his feet and ran. Barsac's sword swung upon the two grovelling with Jean Dortan, and one writhed away and fled. The other was still enough. Jean Dortan was hammering out his brains. Barsac returned to Bonaparte. "You seem to have some enemies, general," said he. "Yet your manners are very agreeable."

Bonaparte came out of the carriage panting: "Captain Barsac? What do you do here?"

"It is not often that one jumps out of the window to meet the husband, is it?" said Barsac with a laugh. Then he saw a line of blood on Bonaparte's temple, and swore. "General, have these swine of civilians hurt you?"

"It is nothing," said Bonaparte quietly. The present danger never troubled him. "Come in. Jean—Jean——" But the methodical rumble of oaths from Jean Dortan, who was picking up the battered coachman, gave evidence that he was not wounded to death. Bonaparte and Barsac went into the house together. Down the street scared heads peered out of dark windows, but brawls were too common under the good government of the Directory to draw a wise bourgeois over his threshold by night.

Under the candles in the hall Bonaparte turned and faced Barsac, and the two men stood close, Bonaparte's eyes searching the reckless gay face that defied him. "It appears, Captain Barsac, that you took the trouble to save my life," said Bonaparte. "I have made a mistake about you."

"I was thoughtless." Barsac gave an irritating smile. "Of course you are the impediment to my affections."

"This is not very amusing, captain."

Barsac broke out laughing. "Ah, well—perhaps the game is up. It is hard now to pretend I love the citizeness very much. But it was entertaining."

Into the hall, a beautiful picture of alarm, Josephine came running. "Napoléon! You are not hurt? How terrible! Was it not glorious of him?"

The two men looked at her scornfully enough. "Get your cloak, Josephine. We go to St. Cloud at once,"

said Bonaparte. Josephine began to babble. "At once," said Bonaparte sharply. "You are in danger yourself."

"Oh, how terrible!" said Josephine, and fluttered away.

Barsac met Bonaparte's eyes. "After all, general," said he, "she is very beautiful—as a doll."

Bonaparte shrugged. "Captain Barsac—you will escort us to St. Cloud. Paris is not safe yet."

Barsac saluted. "Who is the enemy, general?" he asked carelessly.

Bonaparte's eyes flashed. "Let it be enough for you that I call you friend."

Barsac's lips moved in a whimsical smile. He did not appear to appreciate melodrama. "After all, it would be exciting to be your enemy," he murmured.

Bonaparte looked at him keenly. Then he too smiled. He had a value for recklessness. He took Barsac's arm and drew him to the door. "Tell me where you have served," he said. . . .

With Jean Dortan and Captain Barsac, one on either side the coachman, Bonaparte's carriage rolled away to St. Cloud. And other of Fouché's men, coming back to spy out the land, told Fouché that the bird had flown. Fouché spent an uneasy night.

The next morning Lucien was summoned to St. Cloud to hear how vile enemies of the republic had tried to assassinate his heroic brother. Lucien glowed with indignation, and grasped so earnestly at a hint of a reformed government that he believed the idea his own. Bonaparte talked of ancient Rome and consuls, and Lucien was wrought by enthusiasm. He went back afire with pure republican zeal to inflame others.

Some days passed while Lucien worked on his party in the Council, and Sieyès elaborated the details of his constitution, and Bonaparte gathered the army at St. Cloud into his grip. Fouché, who did not dare strike at him in the camp, was much troubled. He had seen Bonaparte use grapeshot before. He would rather stand behind the guns than in front. The matter of getting there was hastened for him by Captain Barsac.

Captain Barsac had an admiration for many other ladies beside Josephine. He did not permit the affair of the Rue Chantierine or the intentions of Fouché to interfere with his opportunities. He was visiting the golden-haired lady whom the world had not yet called Madame Talleyrand when he came upon Fouché. "Citizeness, you are the queen of the summer sky," said he, "and our Fouché the king of a smoky fire." The lady tittered. He described too well Fouché's grey complexion and lurid hair.

Fouché grinned at him. "I forget. Are you the last or the last but one of Josephine's affections? Well, I dare say you don't know."

Barsac smiled very amiably. He took one pace forward. "I detest your complexion," he said blandly.

"Oh, have I touched on a sore?" Fouché grinned. "Be comforted, captain. Bonaparte will help you back to her favours. They are his bribe for fools."

"It is the complexion of a coward," Barsac went on with his own subject. "I will see if I can change it for you." He struck Fouché's grey cheek with his open hand, laughed, and turned on his heel. "If you have a friend who is a gentleman, send him to me," he said, over his shoulder.

“Do not be afraid that I shall forget you, Captain Barsac,” quoth Fouché.

“How witty we are!” cried the lady: “pray be content with a battle of wit.”

“Our poor Fouché, you see, would have no weapons,” Barsac explained.

“Then let it be a battle of politeness.”

“The poor Fouché does not know the rules.”

“But it is you, Captain Barsac——”

“Let it be, citizeness,” said Fouché quietly. “He requires a lesson. He shall have it to meditate on in the next world.”

“Where I shall be far removed from Fouché.”

“In the hell of fools,” quoth Fouché, and slid across the perturbed drawing-room. He changed a word or two here and there, and was gone.

Then Talleyrand limped across to Barsac. “If I had the felicity to be you, captain,” said he in a low, level voice, “I should gallop to St. Cloud, and live quietly awhile.”

“It would be gross flattery of Fouché.”

“You do not value your life? Perhaps you are right. But consider the feelings of those who may have a use for you both.”

“I’ll be no use to the man that uses Fouché,” Barsac laughed.

“I bid you good-bye,” said Talleyrand gravely, and turned away.

But Captain Barsac stayed late, and on his leisurely way home to St. Cloud was not assailed. For Fouché was not thinking of assassination then. You see him alone, the stiff fox-hair ruffled, and the grey face wrought in many wrinkles as he meditates over his own

safety. The end of it was that he went to St. Cloud himself. He was in time to see Sieyès come out of Bonaparte's quarters.

Bonaparte, behind a table bearing two pistols, received him with a queer, puzzling smile.

"Accept the assurance of my entire devotion, general," said Fouché.

"I was curious to know how you would begin," said Bonaparte.

"That is not bad," said Fouché critically. "But as for those things"—he pointed at the pistols, and snapped his fingers at them—"really, general!"

"They are a compliment to you, citizen." Bonaparte smiled.

"But not to your intelligence. Oh, you may hold one of them to my head all the time if you are sure your hand is steady. I am not such a fool as to want to murder you."

"Yet you tried."

"Eh? Oh, you mean that fracas in the Rue Chantier. If they had been my men they would not have bungled you."

Bonaparte laughed. "I know that is a lie, and you know it is a lie, so why——"

"Should we not be at ease?" said Fouché coolly. "After all, when you are plotting against the Directory you must expect to be hit back."

"You are an impudent liar, citizen," said Bonaparte.

Fouché laughed. "Very well, I want to plot with you. That is all."

"Good-day, citizen," said Bonaparte.

Fouché rose. "So be it. I go back to Paris to arrest brother Lucien and his friends."

"Oh," Bonaparte smiled, "then I think you will not go back to Paris," and he struck his bell.

"Do you take me for an idiot?" said Fouché wearily. "Do you suppose I trusted you? If I am not back in Paris in two hours, brother Lucien will be in a cell of the Conciergerie."

"But that would be very uncomfortable for the Citizen Fouché," Bonaparte murmured.

"I know," said Fouché. "I know you must win. But I know I can give you a hell of trouble. Now then, is it worth while?"

"What do you want?" Bonaparte asked.

"What I've got. The same office under you as under the Directory."

Bonaparte meditated, with his eyes on the pistols. "The fact is, I am not sure that I want you, Fouché."

"You will. For three plots there are against your life now——"

"What?" cried Bonaparte with a start. Fouché was through his armour at last.

Fouché swore. "Do you suppose you can make yourself a tyrant without a thousand Jacobins trying to murder you? Don't you know human nature?" . . . There was silence a while. . . . "You'll want the best minister of police you can get," said Fouché, and tapped his breast. "That's all."

He saw Bonaparte moisten his lips. "What plots are these?" said Bonaparte gruffly.

Fouché, who had to invent them on the moment, was glib. He had been in too many plots himself to be in danger of failing for grim details. . . . He made an alarming story. . . . Bonaparte fidgeted, and rose at last, and began to pace the room with quick, short,



nervous steps. Fouché watched, narrow-eyed. He understood perfectly now. Luck and his own vast knowledge of the meanness and weakness of men had delivered Bonaparte into his hands. Peril in mystery quelled the great soldier's soul. He was the slave of the unknown. Fouché exulted. He saw his profit secure. He could wield the power of fear. All Bonaparte's strength was at his order. . . . Bonaparte—the fool! So thought Fouché while he worked out his lies. . . . He had finished the tale some time before Bonaparte answered. . . . “You will see to these plots, Fouché.”

“It's my business if I am Bonaparte's minister of police. Oh—one thing more. There is a bully of yours has forced a quarrel on me. It won't suit you now for me to be made cold meat by the Captain Barsac. . . . Tell him so.”

Bonaparte glared at him. “You will take a humbler tone with me, Fouché, or——”

“When you are king, I'll be a courtier.” Fouché grinned and went out.

Bonaparte sat with his chin on his breast, his great brow drawn, his hands gripping the table, while he wrestled with thought and fear. . . . It was long before he called for Jean Dortan and demanded Captain Barsac. When Barsac came, Bonaparte did not see him at once. Barsac sighed audibly.

Bonaparte brushed the hair back from his brow and looked up. “Ah, Captain Barsac. You have forced a quarrel on the Citizen Fouché?”

“Do not thank me, general. It was a pleasure.”

“What harm has he done you?”

Barsac yawned. “His existence irritates me, my

general. 'Also, I want to annoy the devil. So I am sending him Fouché.'

'You are not amusing, Captain Barsac.' Bonaparte frowned. 'You will compose this quarrel.'

'Precisely, general. In Fouché's grave.'

'Enough, sir! Understand me. Fouché is my friend——'

'I am sorry for you, general.'

'I command you to make him yours.'

Barsac shrugged. There was something of a sneer in his blue eyes. 'It happens to be impossible, sir.'

Bonaparte's eyes gleamed. 'You defy me, Captain Barsac?' he cried.

'The fact is, sir, I am attending to your honour,' said Barsac coolly. 'I found this pig Fouché speaking ill of the citizeness, your wife. You will agree that nothing remains but to kill him.'

'You are suddenly very tender of my honour,' Bonaparte sneered. 'You will only meet Fouché as my friend.'

For a moment Barsac showed his surprise. Then that passed into contempt. He shook his head.

'What, sir?'

'I do not permit men to insult the women I admire. You are different. We shall not understand each other, general.'

Bonaparte let out an oath. 'You talk of your honour for women, you libertine, you debauchee—you——'

'I am human, general, whatever you are,' cried Barsac. He was flushed, and his fingers fidgeted for his sword. 'I warn you!'

'You——' Bonaparte stammered with wrath in a medley of words. 'The guard! Name of God! The

officer of the guard!" he thundered, and when the man broke in, "Captain Barsac is under arrest!" he cried.

"Because General Bonaparte has mislaid his honour," Barsac sneered, as he gave up his sword.

He was but just led away when Jean Dortan bustled into the room. "What has he been doing, general?" said he briskly.

Bonaparte frowned. "What is the fool to you, Jean?"

"He saved our lives," quoth Jean Dortan. "What has he done?"

"He would not obey orders."

Jean Dortan knew Bonaparte too well now to believe much that he said. "What were the orders?" he asked.

"Go to the devil!" said Bonaparte, and turned to his papers.

"That means you are ashamed of them," said Jean Dortan coolly. He studied Bonaparte a while with keen, honest eyes, and checked himself in the moment of saying something and went out. He often put too high a value on silence.

Bonaparte alone reviewed his position. All was going well. The army looked devoted. Lucien had a strong party on the Council. There was nothing to fear but those dark plots against himself. And Fouché answered for them. Fouché was on his side now. He was safe, quite safe. . . . But that night Talleyrand came to him, and after they had talked of Sieyès and Lucien and the Council, "You thought Fouché worth buying?" Talleyrand asked. Bonaparte nodded. "That interests me," said Talleyrand, looking at him curiously.

"For safety," said Bonaparte. Talleyrand coughed.

“Why, you said yourself Fouché was dangerous,” cried Bonaparte.

“I wonder if it is worth while to be quite safe?” said Talleyrand. “One pays so dear.” But Bonaparte did not understand.

The conspiracy prospered. Sieyès finished his constitution. It was saturated with elections. The people were to elect representatives, and they again others, and they others again who were the Council of State. What the Council of State had to do was not clear, for the First Consul had power to do everything, and the First Consul—provisionally, the constitution politely said—was General Bonaparte. But the idea of so many elections captivated Lucien’s republican brain, and he answered for it that the constitution should be popular. The ingenuity of Fouché abolished another chance of danger. The existing Council of the Directory had to be abolished. It might object, and Jacobin Paris support it in contumacy. Fouché organised a sham riot, which so frightened the worthy councillors that they resolved to adjourn to St. Cloud, where they might have the protection of the army. So they walked into the trap. Still the wise Directory, Gohier, Moulin, and the rest, heard nothing, saw nothing.

It was a clear autumn night, and the forest shades loomed blue-black against the silver flood of moonlight. The sky gleamed with stars. Before his quarters Bonaparte paced to and fro on Jean Dortan’s arm. He felt safe enough, for Jean Dortan’s strength was proven, and his sentries had been doubled since Fouché’s tale of plots. He loved such hours beneath the stars.

It happened, unfortunately, that night, that Captain Barsac had an engagement with a Mademoiselle

Duthé, who mattered nothing then and matters nothing now. He had sent by the officer of the guard a message to Bonaparte saying that Captain Barsac offered his compliments and would be glad of leave to finish a very respectable amour. But the man conceived it a kindness to Barsac to keep the message to himself, and so no answer came. Barsac was not the man to disappoint a woman for such a trifle as imprisonment. As soon as the night guard was mounted and all quiet, Captain Barsac squeezed his body through the window-bars and dropped to the ground. He cursed the moonlight in a hearty whisper, but he knew well enough where the sentries should be, and he went warily.

Silent Bonaparte walked, looking often at the splendours of the northern sky. He had new plans of empire now. Now it was to be Europe first, and first England. The sea power that had thwarted him once and again was to be crushed, the race of shopkeepers bled white to feed his arms. Then for the worn-out kingdoms of the mainland. The stupid barriers of race must be battered down and all Europe welded into one people. Then to launch the West upon the East and conquer a world empire. . . . That would be enough even for his strength. . . .

He had halted, he was gazing up at the sky. Under Sirius he saw a tiny point of reddish light. He gripped Jean Dortan's arm fiercely. "See!" he cried, "see! It is my own star!" Jean Dortan looked and grunted. But Bonaparte gazed wide-eyed and his breath came fast. . . . He believed in it. . . . It was the light of the world-fate aglow for him.

"Halt, there!" The challenge rang clear. Captain Barsac, who did not know the sentries were doubled,

had tried to slip through where a gap should be, and found none. "Halt, there! The countersign!" But Captain Barsac ran at his best speed. The sentry flung up his musket and fired. Captain Barsac fell down on his face.

Bonaparte turned, and the light of the star was still in his eyes—turned and saw the dead. . . . He swayed on Jean Dortan's arm, he caught at his throat. "My God!" he muttered hoarsely, "what is it?"

"It is a dead man," said Jean Dortan, and disengaged himself.

"My star," cried Bonaparte, and flung his hand to heaven. . . . "Again . . . again. . . ." With unequal steps he made his way to the dead.

Jean Dortan was there. The guard were running up. Jean Dortan rose and dropped his handkerchief across his face. "It is your Captain Barsac," he said.

Bonaparte bent down, lifted the handkerchief and looked—there was something of a sneer beneath the ugly wound that hid the eyes. "He has his deserts," said Bonaparte. Jean Dortan turned away. "Here! Jean! I want you."

"You are sometimes too much for me," said Jean Dortan, and went off.

Bonaparte stood alone by the dead. Again he looked up at his star; then turned, and slowly, alone, his head bent, he walked back through the moonlight. . . . It was not the fate of Captain Barsac that kept him pacing his room till the sky was yellow at dawn. The death of men who had saved him never broke his rest. But again that grim union of his star and a vision of death wrought and wracked his mind. He went in fear of mystery. He was the slave of wild fancies. He

trembled at he knew not what. Ill at ease with the world, he suspected its heart malign. He felt vague forces he could not grasp or guide, and he cowered.

In the morning he had to throw the dice for power. The Council had to appoint him Consul and abolish themselves. Lucien had done his best with the Council, but many of them were against him—they doubted Bonaparte, they loved the profitable Directory, they loved their own importance. Bonaparte risked as little as he could. His troops were massed about the Château of St. Cloud. When the Council assembled in the Orangery, Le Clerc's grenadiers marched up to the doors.

But when the Council saw the shakoës and bayonets at their door all was tumult. Lucien tried to speak and foe and friend. All was lost in the din: "Live the Constitution! Live Liberty! Down with the Dictator! The Constitution or Death! Live Sacred Fraternity! Live the Council! Live! Live!" So the storm raged, and in the midst of it came Bonaparte himself, Bonaparte in his grey coat, his head sunken a little, pallid, his eyes, dark-ringed, looking right on. Behind him tramped four grenadiers. He was risking nothing.

On the tribune he took his stand, and the shouting died. "Citizens," he cried, "you stand over a volcano. Let a soldier tell the truth frankly. I was quiet in my home when this Council summoned me to action. I obeyed. I wield the sword of my country for her glory. I swear that France holds no more devoted patriot. Dangers surround us. Liberty——" he faltered. His lips moved still, but made no clear sound. He flung out his arms and seemed to point at nothing. He saw again in the midst his star, the vision of death. . . .

“Liberty!” Aréna the Corsican took up the cry. “Liberty!” The name chokes him. “Down with the Dictator! Down with Bonaparte!” and he rushed to the tribune, while the Council broke out: “Down with the Dictator! Down with the tyrant!” and at last there sounded that terrible cry of the Terror, “*Hors la loi! Hors la loi!*” Aréna caught Bonaparte, and others tore at his limbs and began to drag him from the tribune. His grenadiers broke in and rescued him. “Out! Get me out!” he muttered hoarsely. His eyes were fixed and swollen. The grenadiers thrust through the councillors to the door, and Lucien and his party followed swiftly, for already the cry, “*Hors la loi!*” had quelled all else, and Aréna was on the tribune moving the decree of outlawry.

Outside, the soldiers were swaying disorderly, muttering of what it meant; and when they saw Bonaparte, his livid face, his eyes, as of a man with the palsy, the ranks were broken and the regiment a chattering mob. Murat and Le Clerc ran to their general, fiercely asking for orders.

But Bonaparte could not speak.

His fate was on a razor edge. A moment more and the soldiers had scattered. It was Lucien who sprang on a horse, the respectable Lucien, who thundered out, “Soldiers, the Council is betraying the Republic. If my brother were a tyrant,” he plucked out his sword, “this blade should be first in his breast. I call upon you in the name of France, in the name of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, abolish the Council of traitors.”

The soldiers began to cheer, and Murat, turning impatiently from the helpless Bonaparte, cried: “The



drums, name of God, the drums!" and at the roll of the drums the regiment formed again.

"Forward, grenadiers!" cried Lucien the republican. It was the end of the Revolution.

The grenadiers marched into the hall. The champions of liberty had no mind to face the bayonets. They tore off their scarfs of office and scrambled over one another to get out of the windows, while the grenadiers fired at them volleys of laughter.

Lucien and his party went back to the hall and swiftly made outlaws of those who had fled and swiftly established the new constitution and abolished themselves.

But Bonaparte stood without, stood alone, silent and still. . . . Lucien came to him at last: "I salute the First Consul of France!" he cried.

The First Consul of France turned to him a livid face and dull eyes. Trembled . . . . struggled to speak. . . . "It is my star" . . . and he fainted in Lucien's arms. . . . He had won power. . . .

## CHAPTER XII

### HOW HE CAME TO THE SEA

THE murderous mad welter of the Revolution was still. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—all that was a dream of yesterday. France had a master again. The whole duty of man was to obey Bonaparte. For that first noble vision of a nation of freemen and friends he gave them the hope of glory. He himself had nothing better to live for. So blind, he made them blind, and led them on. I suppose he was never a moment happy.

First Consul in name, lord of all France in fact, he was making ready new war. "My power," he would say, "my power is built on glory, and my glory on victories. Battle and victory have made me great" (this was something of an attitude). "Battle and victory must maintain me." England annoyed him. England had baulked him of that Empire in the East of which from boyhood he had dreamed, for which he longed till death. England mocked at him with her insular might. And so, while still he promised peace, from the Seine to the Rhine he made "a coast of iron and bronze," a coast that swarmed with gunboats and soldiery. Hither and thither he went, spurring on engineer and shipwright and sailor, urging toil upon toil in fierce inhuman activity.

He had always to be doing something. Since the hour when love died in him he was afraid of himself. He had lost all the joy of life, all the kindly pleasure of being a man among men. He could not dare rest and

think of himself as he was or fancy what he would be in the days to come. He chose the coarsest pleasures of an animal before that. Seeing the dismal life of his soul, remembering what like he was—it was that which wrung from him the cry that puzzled Bourrienne. “I am in torment! In torment! I must on! On!” Action alone could numb the misery of him.

The mellow sunshine of late spring was falling on the white forest of tents that clothed the hill of Biauville. Away on the lower ground by the sea Soult had his divisions at drill. In a space apart on the hilltop where a sentry paced stood a tent larger than the common. Before it a silver eagle flashed in the sun, and by the eagle a square, swarthy man in grey plain clothes sat cross-legged smoking, much at his ease. To the tent came a lean fellow, gorgeously clad. His hair was fox-colour, and he walked sideways—that M. Fouché, regicide and chief of police. You see the haggard red face smile as he goes in. Then there are murmurs of talk, and sometimes Bonaparte’s bronze voice rings passionately, and the gentle murmur goes on again.

M. Fouché came out smiling still, and sidled away through the tents to Biauville where he had his quarters. He was not the man to sleep in the wind when he could get behind a wall. The cross-legged man, Jean Dortan, blew a cloud of smoke after him. When he was fairly gone Bonaparte came out.

Bonaparte’s head was sunken, he carried one shoulder higher than the other, and his mouth was twitching from left to right. Fumbling in the pocket of his waistcoat he drew out a tortoise-shell snuff-box. He took a great pinch in his fingers, smelt it, threw it away, and so did again, and again, and again. Then he gave his shoulders

a shake, and straightened himself. For the first time he seemed to see what was about him. He strode up to Jean Dortan, and stirred that broad back with his foot. "Big Jean! Give me your arm." For all his weight Jean Dortan was on his feet in one movement. He shook out the dottle of his pipe, thrust the pipe into his breast, and turned to Bonaparte. Bonaparte linked arms with him and hurried him on as fast as a man need want to walk.

Down the hill to landward they went, through the silver and green of a beech wood and out over meadows spangled with gold and fragrant—on and on and on. "What devil is riding you, my captain?" quoth Jean Dortan.

"What do you know of devils?" growled Bonaparte.

"Who knows you meet a many," said Jean Dortan. He glanced at Bonaparte's grim eyes. "Humph! I suppose it was that M. Fouché. He makes me want to spit on him, that M. Fouche."

"Fouché is a wise man. He wants no friends. And means me to have none, I think. He has some damnable truth against every one. Talleyrand is two-faced, Bourrienne a thief—bah! fire is hot and water is wet. My wife has a lover—one more or less, does it matter? It is my brothers now—Louis is spreading an infamy about me, and Joseph and Lucien are making eyes at England. Yes! It is a world of fools that are knaves. I know well I have not one friend. Friendship! that is a name. Madmen worship it. I have no one, and grip the world."

"You are sometimes very little, my captain," said Jean Dortan coolly.

"You—I wonder why you stay by me. You are not

afraid of me. You never ask for anything. You could earn more than I pay you."

"Don't you want me?" said Jean Dortan.

Bonaparte looked into his eyes. "You who never get anything of me—yes, I want you more than anything."

"Perhaps that is why I stay," said Jean Dortan.

"You are greatly loyal, my big Jean," said Bonaparte with enthusiasm. Jean Dortan grunted. Bonaparte walked more slowly. His cold eyes began to smile. "Well! I have power. I can get more power, and more. I shall do greater deeds in the world than a man has ever done before I come to the end. I shall conquer——"

"What is the good of it?" said Jean Dortan.

Bonaparte shrugged his right shoulder. "What is the good of life?"

"That is what you don't understand," said Jean Dortan with composure. "To make the wheat grow for your children and feel the wind blowing through sunshine, there is nothing better than that."

"You talk like a peasant, big Jean," said Bonaparte with a sneer.

"The peasants are wiser than you," said Jean Dortan. "They know what's real in the world. They are in tune with it. Do you feel the spring in the air, my captain?"

"I am not a boy," Bonaparte snarled.

"The worse for you. Yes, you have always been old, my captain. I wonder what you sold your youth for."

"For a little sense, Jean." They had come down through a spinney of birch to an orchard white and fragrant. Among the trees a girl was feeding her chickens.

"There is one who knows more than you," said Jean Dortan.

She was a sturdy lass, but womanly enough in her close

grey jersey. The sunlight shot her brown hair with gold. Sun and wind had made her cheeks darkly mellow like a peach, but below her neck was white as the white kerchief about it. Jean Dortan, I fancy, thanked God for all. She pleased Bonaparte as a sleek horse pleased him.

"Here, child!" he called.

She looked at them a moment, flung her last handfuls of grain to the chicks, and came leisurely. She made a little curtsy to Bonaparte, another, a half-inch lower, to Jean Dortan, and looked Bonaparte frankly in the eye.

He took her chin between finger and thumb and tilted her face against the light. Then he patted her cheek.

"Humph, I suppose some man owns all this," said he.

"It is certainly not Your Excellency," said the girl coldly, and drew out of his reach.

"I could pay high for it, child."

The girl drew farther back. "Pay!" she said, in a low, scornful voice, "Your Excellency thinks very well of me."

"Oh, the best of us can be bought, child. You are well enough. Have the sense to sell yourself for something worth having."

"I thank Your Excellency"—her curtsy was minute—"I had rather be my own woman."

"A woman has no right to be her own," said Bonaparte. "You must be a man's servant, and nurse his children." The girl looked proudly. "What! Is that not enough for you?"

"I will tell the man who has the right to ask," said the girl.

"And what like must your man be?"

"To Your Excellency," says the girl meekly, "I could not aspire."

Some one was whistling hard by. Bonaparte, to whom all music was one, did not know the tune, but Jean Dortan did, and it surprised him. For it was no less than an English sailor's song:

*Now farewell to you, ye fine Spanish ladies,  
Now farewell to you, ye ladies of Spain;  
For we've received orders to sail for old England,  
And perhaps we may never more see you again.*

Jean Dortan strode to the hedge and looked over it. The whistling stopped. He could see no one.

Bonaparte, who did not approve of people mocking him, had taken a quick step forward and pinched the girl's ear and her bare brown arm. He stared into her eyes—grey eyes, calm with the mysterious wisdom of pure womanhood.

"Why not me, girl?" he asked harshly. "I might be pleased with you. You are prettily plump, and wholesome red and white. A man would be sure he had not to do with a spirit in you."

The girl freed herself. There was wonder and contempt in the curve of her lip. She had flushed in proud anger. Jean Dortan, returning, glowered at Bonaparte. "In fact you do not know much about the spirit, my captain," said he.

"Your Excellency seems to want to make people unhappy," the girl cried, and turned swiftly and left him.

Bonaparte frowned after her as long as she was in sight. Then he turned and met Jean Dortan's eyes.

"I said she knew more about life than you," said Jean Dortan coolly.

"Go to the devil!" cried Bonaparte, and turned to hurry back.

"You are always the leader," said Jean Dortan, and followed.

Again Bonaparte was off at the wild pace he always used to ease his fretted brain. The girl had set him at odds with himself again. There was in her an infinity of things that irked him. The content of her, the silent claim to a knowledge of what must be ever out of his sight, the simple purity that shrank from his touch, and his eyes—all that roused him to an anger in which there was something to fear.

He despised all women because he could love none. And at whiles hated himself for it, for knowing no passion but an animal's.

Now this girl and her womanhood stung his brain. He felt a power with which the vast power in him could not grapple—a power that evaded and mocked him, that worked subtly in hidden ways yet availed as much as the ordered crash of strength which he could make and guide. That alien power was in her, and she—she was atune with the world. What of himself, then? "You want to make people unhappy." Spite of all glory and man-staggering deeds was that the last judgment on him? . . . "You want to make people unhappy."

Suddenly he broke out in a torrent of words. "Jean, big Jean, I will do such things as the world has never seen. I will beat down these stupid tyrant kings and nobles and set the people free. I will have our Revolution everywhere. To England first, with a hundred thousand men, and strike at the aristocrats and give their wealth to the people. So with the rest. I will make an Empire of Europe, all one vast realm, with no stupid neighbours' quarrels to waste life. And all men shall be equal, and



each man shall have his chance. We will have no fools fattening on the wise. Justice for every man, and order and no waste, so that we give a decent life to every babe. I will do it and make a name next to God's, I will set myself next to God, and as God they shall honour me, these peoples."

"Humph! You will not want me, then," quoth Jean Dortan.

Bonaparte gripped his arm and stood still, staring into his eyes. "There is only you, Jean," he said in another voice, and he held Jean Dortan's arm close as he walked on, more slowly now, to the camp.

M. Fouché was waiting for him in front of his tent. "Again, Fouché?" said Bonaparte without joy, and Fouché smiled. Jean Dortan was drawing back with celerity, but, "Stay with me, Jean," Bonaparte insisted.

"He gives me an indigestion, this M. Fouché," Jean Dortan grumbled; but he stayed.

Fouché, little eyes glittering in a red face, began his tale: "Moved by my anxious fears for the safety of the First Consul and my solicitude for——"

"Ah, bah, leave out all that. You are not such a fool as to suppose that I am a fool."

Fouché bowed to the compliment and came briefly to business. "In fine, sir, I have had the countryside, and in particular the coastward countryside, patrolled and watched with pains." He stopped for applause; he was greedy of that as a child. Bonaparte nodded. "Having in regard the incitements to murder in the English prints——" he paused to take snuff, and over the box watched Bonaparte shift uneasily. "I have of late made special provisions, bringing to the district

employés of my ministry who have had experience in London. Among them——” he looked craftily at Jean Dortan, then back at Bonaparte, and his eyelids flickered. “I must be discreet in society. Among them—Number Seven,” and he smiled at Jean Dortan.

Jean Dortan started up. “M. Fouché does not want me. And I am sure I never wanted M. Fouché.” Out he went, and sat down on the turf outside and lit his placid pipe.

Fouché went blandly on. “It is Méhée, then, who reports that in the gloaming last night he had a glimpse of an old friend of ours, Master Wild, the English spy, who did us the honour of planning Cadoudal’s plot and Pichegru’s. Now he comes to France himself instead of sending assassins; so he would seem to be more earnest to murder Your Excellency.”

The veins in Bonaparte’s temples swelled dark. He started up. “Am I a dog to be beaten to death on the road?” he cried hoarsely. Then turning to Fouché: “Have you caught him? Have you caught him?” His chest was heaving wildly, his hands unsteady. It was always so. The man who knew no fear in the midst of battle or in grand design was caught by panic at hint of an ambushed danger. Fouché’s little eyes twinkled at him joyfully. “Have you caught him?” he cried again.

“Oh, no,” said Fouché calmly.

“Why not, then? What are you paid for? What are your spies kept for? Is my life to be for the hand of any ruffian? Here, Jean, Jean!” He paced feverishly to and fro, and, when Jean Dortan came, gripped his arm and held it close and stood still so, with the big man against him.

Fouché smiled. They say that he invented these

plots of murder to make Bonaparte believe him necessary. It is so, doubtless; but also I think he liked to see Bonaparte frightened. "Your Excellency treats these dangers too lightly," said Fouché. "We have as yet no knowledge of where this fellow is lurking, but I am making a search by system, and if he is within twenty miles of Biauville, I shall have him to-night."

Bonaparte, who was something calmer, turned on him with a sharp light in the grey eyes. "It had best be so, Fouché."

"I see Your Excellency's anxiety. It shall be so." He bowed and went out.

Jean Dortan directed eyes of no admiration on Bonaparte. "So you have been letting M. Fouché frighten you again," he said, and shrugged.

Bonaparte relinquished his arm and adopted a grand attitude. "Fear? You have seen me at Toulon, at Lodi. Did I fear then? No, Jean. It is not for myself's sake I care for life. It is for France, for the world. Go; bid Bourrienne come, and Berthier."

Jean Dortan went, and as he went saw Bonaparte looking round the canvas of the tent to make sure that the sentry was watchful.

Sitting safe between his secretary and his chief of the staff, Bonaparte worked on his plans for the downfall of England—the lure for the English fleets, the feint at Ireland, the deadly blow at London—the most grandly daring of all his daring work.

Jean Dortan went off down the hill through the fragrance of the May sunshine. Again he came past that spinney of birch to the orchard, came on now to the white farmhouse beyond. The girl sat by the doorway between budding roses, and her spinning-wheel

was swift. There was a man, a sleek fellow of beady black eyes lounging at her side. She looked up at Jean Dortan's step with something of anxiety.

"Be of good cheer, Marie, I am alone this time," quoth Jean Dortan.

"I shall not forgive you for not being alone before," said the girl gravely.

"I infer," said the man at her side, "I infer that I am the third and *de trop*. It is not dignified," and he was going.

"No, indeed, sir, I——"

"Oh, believe me, mademoiselle, monsieur will like me very much better away. And perhaps you will not like me worse." He was gone into the house.

"Who is it?" Jean Dortan asked in a whisper.

"It is M. van Bosch, of Liège, who is here to make a contract with my brother for the wool crop." Having thus exhausted that subject, she looked frankly at Jean Dortan. Jean Dortan looked frankly at her. She went on spinning in a sudden fervour.

Jean Dortan, very large and very square, took his stand by her. He shifted his weight from one leg to the other. He grunted eloquently.

"You are perhaps saying something?" said the girl in meek malice.

"I think I do nothing worse than talking," Jean Dortan confessed; "and I talk to nobody worse than you."

"I am glad of that, at least," the girl murmured.

"In fact Marie"—Jean Dortan having found something he wanted to say, blurted it out in a hurry—"in fact, I am sorry the Little Corporal hurt you. I did not mean that."

"Oh, but he is piteous, you know," the girl cried. "Does he know nothing of the good things?"

"I think he'll never know much," said Jean Dortan.

"But you like him?" she asked, with wondering eyes. "You are his friend?"

Jean Dortan appeared to be in travail with a thought.

"It is perhaps that one is still a friend when one does not like, because one can help," and he looked at Marie diffidently to see what she thought of that speculation.

Marie's grey eyes darkened in tenderness. Swiftly she turned from Jean Dortan. . . . The wind came about her with the breath of that delicate pageant in the orchard. She saw its mingled delights, faint pink and white and grey and green. "Ah, so good, so glad a world!" she cried, and her full lips parted in a tiny smile.

Jean Dortan put his hand on her hair with a clumsy caress.

She bent in a hurry over her spinning-wheel.

Jean Dortan stood very close to her. . . . He grunted from time to time. His large swarthy face exhibited perfect bliss.

The shadows were dark before he moved. Then she looked up to him again. Through the gloom each saw the other's eyes. "Humph," said Jean Dortan. "Till to-morrow, then, Marie."

"Till to-morrow, Jean," said Marie in a low voice.

Jean Dortan started. She had never said as much before. He tried to make the right answer. But in fear of her boldness she fled.

Jean Dortan strode off drunk with joy.

That respectable wool merchant, M. van Bosch, of Liège, who had observed these very tender passages through the window, grinned at the world. "Every

man has his own way of it," said he. "But his would leave me hungry."

"Pardon, monsieur?" said Marie.

"I was giving you joy, my dear," said M. van Bosch, and left her in blushes. He met her brother Paul returning from the lambs. With the brother he walked to and fro in the gloaming discussing the wool crop till supper was ready. And as he walked a man, invisible behind the hedge, surveyed him with minute care.

Jean Dorton, on his way back to the camp, was passed by a man in a great hurry. Jean Dorton knew him for one of Fouché's spies, and spat. When he came to Bonaparte's tent, there inside was M. Fouché. He spat again and went over to sup with the sergeant's mess of the Consular Guard. From which he was called before he had eaten his fill to attend Bonaparte.

In the hall of the farmhouse, M. van Bosch sat at supper with Paul and Marie. They had come to the baked apples when M. van Bosch checked his eating suddenly and put his head on one side to listen. Then, without a sound, he went to the window and peered out. Paul and Marie, who had heard nothing, looked at each other in surprise. When M. van Bosch turned his sleek face was alert. He went out into the kitchen, to the home of the hams and the herbs and the pump.

"What is it, monsieur?" cried Paul Désaignes, and he started up, and Marie.

"Silence!" hissed M. van Bosch. He was by the back door with his ear to the ground.

Brother and sister approached him on tiptoe, utterly amazed. "But what is it?" Paul whispered.

M. van Bosch arose. "It is," said he in a swift whisper, "that you must swear I went out after dinner and have

not yet returned." He came in one springing stride to the pump and jerked up the trap-door by it that covered the well. "Away! Abolish my plate, my knife, all trace of me. On your lives!" Sliding by the pipe of the pump, down the well he went.

Paul and Marie stared at each other distraught . . . From the front of the house came a sudden sharp noise—beyond doubt the clash of steel. They darted back to the hall to see what it was, and peered out of the window. Then M. van Bosch without a sound emerged from the well and unseen of them, went up the wide chimney. He never trusted any one more than he could help, this M. van Bosch.

For he was in fact Jerry Wild. The Jerry Wild who sent Nelson news of Villeneuve's fleet, who planned Cadoudal's plot, and saved himself from the ruin of it. He was, I suppose, as great a spy as the world has ever seen. Some call him an assassin, too. But that I doubt—for reasons.

So Jerry Wild went up the kitchen chimney where the bacon hung for smoking, and Paul Désaignes and his sister stared out anxiously through the dark. Suddenly they saw the hedges move. Every twig was alive with men. Then Marie remembered the words of her M. van Bosch, and in a panic of blind fear rushed at the table and began to clear the supper plates away. While she clattered the things clumsily in her haste came a loud knock.

Her brother unbarred the door. It was instantly flung wide in his face. Colonel Savary, of the military police, strode in with a sergeant's guard of his men, and M. Fouché was with them, and with Fouché was Méhée de la Touche, the chief of his spies, the man of the flaccid

cheeks like skim milk. "That is the farmer—that——" said Méhée, and Savary gripped Paul Désaignes. Marie stood at gaze, white-faced.

"Rascal," said Fouché, "where is your guest?"

"My guest?" Paul stammered.

"Do not waste my time," Savary growled. "We know he is here. Now, where is he?"

"He—he went out. After dinner," said Paul.

"That is a lie," said Méhée in his pleasant silky voice.

Savary thrust Paul into the arms of one of his men. "Guard him, you, Brigue; Frêne, hold the girl. Search the house."

His men came clattering in with their lanterns and set to work, thrusting into every corner. Soon the neat farmhouse was chaos. From every room came a hideous din of wanton destruction. They raked in cupboard and chest, and the floor was strewn with broken china and battered pewter and tumbled linen. "Oh, sir, need they? Need they?" Marie wailed in agony for her home.

"Tell me where the villain is," growled Savary.

"Indeed, sir, he went out," Marie protested.

Savary swore at her and swore at his men, and diligently they searched; but they did not go up the chimney, and they did not find Jerry Wild.

In the midst of it all there was a sound of horsemen, then a murmur, and in came Berthier and Jean Dortan, and behind them, close buttoned in a grey coat, Bonaparte. One glance of the steel eyes saw all, and Paul Désaignes cowered before him. But Marie was looking at Jean Dortan in wonder, in horror.

The great brow lowered down: "Fouché! Imbecile!" his voice rang. "Must you always be blundering?"



Fouché came forward with hesitation. He found it difficult to look in Bonaparte's eyes. But, "I protest, sir—I protest, Your Excellency," said he in a hurry, "I protest the villain was here after we had a cordon round the house."

"Fool! You still have those who know where he is gone." Bonaparte turned on Paul Désaignes. "Now, my friend, you have been harbouring an assassin. I wish to believe that you did not know it. This M. van Bosch of yours is an accursed English spy who has tried to murder me. Prove me your ignorance of his designs by telling me where he is hiding."

Paul Désaignes might be afraid of those steel eyes, but he was a stolid Picardy peasant, stubbornly faithful to his friends. "I do not believe he is a murderer," said he. "He has eaten my bread, Your Excellency. Also, he went away after dinner."

"That is a lie," said Méhée de la Touche in his silky voice.

"Rascal!" cried Bonaparte, and from beneath the dark brow grey flame leapt out at Paul Désaignes; "Rascal! do you dare lie to me? The villain is seeking my life; he is an assassin, a viper. Tell me where you have hidden him?"

"I tell you he went away after dinner. You have made a mistake. It is a good fellow who has eaten my bread, and would not murder any one."

"Those who hide murderers are punished like murderers. A hanging awaits you, rascal, unless I hear truth. Bah, Savary, a rope! Will those hooks in the rafters bear a man?" And while Savary's men bustled for the hanging his eyes smote at Paul Désaignes. But he had made a mistake. The sturdy man of the

soil was of those whom the fear of death hardens into adamant. What he would not give for kindness he would not give for fear.

Bonaparte turned from him with some mutter of disgust, and took a step to Marie. "You, woman! You must know where the beast is lurking. Tell me!"

The girl—her face was pallid—trembled and shuddered, but she did not speak. She was looking, not at Bonaparte, but at Jean Dortan—Jean Dortan who did nothing, whose set face told her no comfort nor help. He was not good at expression, this Jean Dortan.

"Do you wish to see your brother hanged, then?" Bonaparte thundered. "Come, Savary, make short!"

Savary gave a sign. Roughly his men seized Paul Désaignes and bound him. A rope was rove about his neck. They lifted their lanterns on high that the girl might see him well.

Bonaparte made a gesture at him. "A pretty picture for a sister!" said he, and his eyes were cruel as a wintry sea.

Marie was not looking at them. Marie was not looking at her brother either. Silent, her agony cried to Jean Dortan.

Jean Dortan shrugged. "One must speak, in fact," said he.

Then her brother even with death closing about him, cried, "Marie, it is our guest. He has eaten our bread."

Jean Dortan shrugged again. "One must speak even so," said he. He was entirely calm. He alone in all that company of tortures and tortured had the power of sane manhood, and beside him all the fierce tyrant force of Bonaparte seemed curiously little.

Marie gave a sob of anguish, of relief. "I will speak. Yes, I will!" she cried. "He went down the well."

Her brother broke out in some wild abuse.

Bonaparte laughed, and gave her cheek a fillip. "Women have their use, eh, Jean? We understand them, you and I."

Jean Dortan considered Bonaparte with grave eyes. The girl gasped and sobbed and wept.

Savary's men were away to the kitchen, had the trap-door up and let a lantern down the well. It will not surprise you that they saw nothing but water and a pipe and a grey circumference of chalk. They were not pleased. Least pleased of all was the man whom they lowered down in a bight of rope to sound the water and see if Jerry Wild had drowned himself. Jerry Wild, as you know, had done nothing so enterprising. They came back to tell Bonaparte.

Bonaparte turned on Marie, his face dark with rage, and roared a volley of vile words at her.

"Humph! This is dignity," said Jean Dortan.

But the girl, lost in amazement that M. van Bosch could so vanish utterly, had heard little.

Bonaparte stormed on. "You are traitors both—murderers—assassins. But you shall suffer. I swear it, you shall suffer. I will hang you both, him here above your eyes and you before he is too near death to feel your torture. Come then, Savary, a rope more!"

Jean Dortan, who was still calm, came forward one pace. "One does in a corner what one wants to hide," said he.

Bonaparte turned on him. "Hide? I will have all France know. I will have all the world know. Yes! All men shall see how Bonaparte takes vengeance on assassins."

"All men will think you are ashamed to take your vengeance in the open," said Jean Dortan.

"Then in the light they shall die!" cried Bonaparte. "In the morning before all the army. Yes, by my star! All the world shall see how Bonaparte deals with his foes. Savary, have them in guard. Let them spend the night together. They will enjoy themselves, talking of their deaths. Ah, my friends, they say hanging hurts a little. You will find out. Yes; I think you will have a happy night together. Away!" Savary's men swept them roughly out. Jean Dortan took two paces after them and stood in the doorway watching. . . . Bonaparte was abusing M. Fouché. "You are a blunderer! A ninny! An imbecile! Is it to make me farces like this that you are paid? Look to it, M. Fouché—scour the countryside at dawn and find me this fellow. Find him, do you hear? Or I shall find myself another minister, M. Fouché." He strode to the door. "Big Jean," said he, "ah, my big Jean, that is a cool square head of yours," and he pinched Jean Dortan's ear. At the touch of him Jean Dortan started away. "Come then, ride," said Bonaparte, and he mounted, and between the sturdy strength of Berthier and Jean Dortan rode back to camp. But he was not at ease. Till they were within the line of sentries he had a glance for every bush, for every shadow. The unforeseen, the unforeseeable, haunted him. . . .

It is not of him that I think on that ride through the night, but of Jean Dortan—Jean Dortan with his sane manly wit hammering out his problem of life and love. . . .

They came to Bonaparte's tent and he dismounted wearily, and with a "Good-night, my friends," went in.

But Jean Dortan came after him. "I shall not want you, Jean," he said, "I am for bed." But Jean Dortan sat on his bed. Bonaparte patted the big shoulder. "Till the morning, Jean. This affair has tried me."

"This affair is all wrong," said Jean Dortan. "You are making a beast of yourself, my captain."

Bonaparte drew back. The grey eyes began to gleam. "Jean Dortan, my friend, it is not well to interfere with me."

"Since I always help, I may interfere sometimes. Well, you are all wrong. You must not kill these people. They are good people, I answer for them—I, Jean Dortan, whom you know for your friend."

Bonaparte flung an oath at him. "Am I to have assassins all about me and not crush them?"

"They are no more assassins than the wheat they grow. You are credulous and timid as a priest. The man who was with them may be anything (if M. Fouché says he is an assassin, it is very likely he is something else), but they only knew him as an honest trader. They are as guilty against you as I am."

Bonaparte stamped up and down. "I tell you I would not pardon them for my mother herself. What! Shall I let every peasant cherish an assassin? Am I to be beaten to death like vermin? I will put fear abroad. The gallows of these two shall teach France. What are two scurvy peasant lives to my ease? Bah, if you cared for me at all you would not ask for them. But you are like all the rest. It is self with you all. You care for nothing else. Self—self—self! Ah, bah, can you not think of me for a moment? You who believe in friends and love and the rest. No; all that is words.

I put my hand on a plaything of yours, I cross your lust and you are against me like all the rest. Even you, Jean Dortan, who boast your friendship. And I wished to trust you, Jean. . . . But no! It is destiny. I shall never find one who is faithful to me. I am alone."

"You have had ten years of my life," said Jean Dortan. "If I have served you, you best know. I have asked you for nothing till now. Now I ask you for the lives of a man and a woman who have done you no wrong."

"Away with you! away!" cried Bonaparte. "It is an infamy to ask it. Shall I give you my blood, my life?"

"You understand, my captain? This is good-bye," said Jean Dortan, looking into his eyes.

"Go, then!" cried Bonaparte. "I have no use for one who sets a woman before me. Fool, go!"

And Jean Dortan went out.

Bonaparte stood looking across the calm of the night and the cool night wind. The blue dome of the sky was fretted with tiny grey clouds that moved between him and the white light of the stars. Save for the tramp of the sentries his teeming camp was still. He stood alone, the guarded master of all, scorning all mankind. With a shrug he turned from the fresh darkness, let fall the flaps of his tent, flung off his clothes, and lay down. He bade himself sleep, and in a moment was sleeping soundly as a child.

Along the turf outside, in the black gloom beside the tent, was the faintest rustle. A gentleman who had admired Bonaparte was progressing upon his belly. He listened with his ear to the canvas, raised it an inch, and by the lantern light saw Bonaparte sleeping safe. He slid in beneath the flaps and then arose. He was Jerry Wild.

Jerry Wild is one of my country's great men, and to him we all owe much. His natural modesty has prevented history from devoting to him his due of eloquence. But he would make the fortune of a historian of the heroic school. In particular, his achievements of this night sparkle set in a careful narrative.

Go back to the farmhouse chimney. There was a cautious if sooty head rose of it. Just that inch or two which sufficed for the eyes to look all round. He saw the cordon still about the farmhouse, and men prodding into the ricks and diving into byre and hen-roost. It was not yet time for him to go. He remained comfortably wedged in his chimney. Up it came, all the din of the search. Then Bonaparte's bronze voice. He heard Paul and Marie doomed to death for his sake. "The Corsican," he muttered, "never was a gentleman." A gentleman Jerry Wild considered himself, and I confess I'll not deny him the name. But he saw no need to come down that chimney. He watched Savary's men driving Paul and Marie away to death. He saw the cordon withdrawn and the men march back to camp. He let them get well out of hearing before he came out of his chimney and on to the thatch, and with no gratuitous noise, to the ground. Then he made a right line for the shore.

From the seaward face of the down he saw the mast-head lights of the watching English frigates. He made for a square clump of juniper bushes and plunged into them. You see him busy there with a tinder box. Soon he had a big lantern alight, raised it head high, lowered it, raised it again, and then put it out. Two red lights one above the other showed in a frigate's mizzen rigging. Jerry Wild turned on the instant and began to run.

He was bred in North Devon. He could run all day, if need were. He had still abundant breath when it was necessary to check and go warily. He wormed his way through the sentries. He came through the sleeping camp with the ghost-step of his trade, fell to hands and knees when he saw the silver eagle by Bonaparte's tent. He finished the last yards on his belly in time to see Bonaparte looking out at the night. Then he lay still, waiting till it should please Bonaparte to go to sleep. He says he nearly went asleep too. I doubt that.

Now you have him in the tent. All dappled with soot and grey chalk dust he made a weird figure as he stood erect, scanning everything—the secretaire with its rough litter of papers, the holsters and sword on the tent-pole below the lantern, Bonaparte's face, still and calm like a cameo in old ivory against the white pillow. He put his hand to his breast and loosened a sheath-knife of a foot long. He glanced again at Bonaparte. Then with a swift silent movement he came to the secretaire. He was careful of the papers in his dirty hands, but his eyes were busy. Surely never a spy found richer treasure than those plans for the blow at England. The orders for Gantheaume and Missiessy and Villeneuve, all were there in the rough. Jerry Wild read them with the eyes of experience and put them away in that wonderful memory of his. And then he turned, smiling through his soot, to Bonaparte. Silently he came to the bedside and drew out his knife....

He considered the sleeper a moment more.... He put a dirty hand on Bonaparte's silk shirt and shook him. Bonaparte began to murmur sleepily. "Jean, big Jean—my friend—let me sleep a while yet, I beg you."



Jerry Wild continued to grin and to shake. "If you cry out, you will force me to kill you," said Jerry Wild suavely. Bonaparte opened his eyes and sat up with a start. "Awake to this, Your Excellency; if you cry out, kill you I certainly shall."

Bonaparte, sitting up in bed, dull-eyed, pallid, with wild hair, saw the sooty smiling face, and gaped, and felt the knife prick at his breast. He did not cry out.

"I do not wish to kill you," Jerry Wild continued suavely. "If I did, I should not have thought it necessary to wake you. In fact, I am here to assure Your Excellency that I never had any intention of killing you. But if you do not listen to me quietly, kill you I must—to my infinite regret."

Bonaparte, a naked man with a knife on his breast, was wise enough to do nothing. "I wait on you, M. Black-face," said he gravely.

"Your Excellency must understand that in coming here I trust myself wholly to your honour," said Jerry Wild.

"Your trust," said Bonaparte, regarding the knife, "is most touching."

"Your Excellency is deceived by appearances. Permit me to present myself: I am Jerry Wild. Now, Your Excellency has been misled by the vain delusion that I wish to murder you. So far misled that you propose to hang two very worthy and wholesome fools, your subjects, for having sheltered me. I do hope that my conduct of the last few minutes has convinced you that I am no murderer."

"Rascal!" cried Bonaparte. "You——"

Jerry Wild went on in a hurry: "Your Excellency is prejudiced. Also it will injure your health if you

talk loud. Now consider. If I were a murderer I might have stabbed you in your sleep and retired as safely as I came. Even now I could have my knife in your heart before a cry got beyond the tent; but I should deplore such a conclusion almost as much as you. All that is necessary to your salvation is that those two worthy and wholesome fools should be set free. My honour——”

“Your honour!” Bonaparte sneered.

“Well,” said Jerry Wild coolly, “I at least am showing that I have some. Consider; I was safe out of your grip. I came back for nothing but to save these innocents. I have had your life in my hand, and proved to you that I am no murderer. I am only a spy. They were too simple to think me less than an honest man. Give them their foolish lives, then. As for me, I confess a spy’s life is fairly forfeit; but since I have spared yours you may well spare mine. Promise me on your honour, the lives of the three of us, and I drop my knife. I have come back out of safety to trust my life to your honour. If a spy can trust you, you should be able to keep faith with a spy.”

“It is a fair offer,” said Jean Dortan.

Jerry Wild started at the new voice. His hand wavered a moment, and Bonaparte, dashing the knife aside, hurled him out of bed and sprang behind Jean Dortan’s massive strength. “You are *a propos*, my big Jean,” said he, and laughed, keeping the while a wary eye on Jerry Wild—Jerry Wild, who balanced himself on the balls of his feet ready to spring.

Jean Dortan encircled Bonaparte with one big arm. “You’ll not give him his terms, then, my captain?” he inquired.

“A dog of a spy?” cried Bonaparte. “I’ll give him the——”

Into his rugged mouth was thrust a lump of wood, pear-shaped, an efficient gag. A noose was flung over him and drawn till it bit into his arms. Helpless and speechless, his eyes flaming venom, he was put down upon his bed.

“The deuce and all!” said Jerry Wild in English. And “What’s all this?” in French.

“He has had his chance to be honest,” said Jean Dortan. “Now he has just one chance to live.” Jean Dortan’s heavy stolid strength was athrob with life, his honest dark eyes lit with a new fire. And Bonaparte lay before him, a distorted form, ghastly in the misery of impotent hate.

The previous proceedings of Jean Dortan, which were simply practical as his own nature, demand a word. When Bonaparte bade him begone he went slowly to the little tent *à l’abri* beside Bonaparte’s, where he was wont to sleep. Sitting just inside it, cross-legged, he watched the lights die, and felt sleep capture the camp. A while he gazed at the clean starlight. Then he took up his tent-peg mallet and with swift strong fingers whittled the head of it into the likeness of a pear. From a coil of picket rope he made a running noose. Thus armed he went back to Bonaparte’s tent, nodding to the nodding sentry as he passed. He was almost in before he caught the sound of Jerry Wild’s gentle voice and checked. It surprised him, of course, but it pleased him too. There was one more decent man in the world than he had supposed. Also, Bonaparte was to have one chance more.

Bonaparte refused it, and Jean Dortan had no mercy. Jean Dortan knelt above him with a broad knife at his throat, and Bonaparte, his lean fine-cut face torn into

strange lines by that rough gag, looked up into Jean Dortan's eyes. He saw something unlike the cool calculated daring of Jerry Wild. Cruelty flashed fierce in the ruthless passion of a kindly man fighting for a woman. He felt a force that mastered the stark warrior force of his own soul. It gripped him, an impotent victim. It dazed him. . . .

"I swear by God I will cut your throat unless you do what I bid."

The words woke him. A medley of thought and passion began to throb in his brain. . . . He saw himself nothing and all his plans a ruin. . . . That the force to beat him down should be Jean Dortan, the one man who had been his soul's friend—that set him in an agony of rage with the world. . . . The world was a devil's, and in a devil's likeness. . . .

His bonds were jerked till from the elbow his arms were free. He was banked up against a pillow. Pen and paper were put in his hands.

"Write what I bid you."

Bonaparte, impotent under the knife stared at the paper's grim mockery.

#### FRENCH REPUBLIC.

LIBERTY.

EQUALITY.

#### BONAPARTE, First Consul.

"Write!" growled Jean Dortan. "The place—the date—'To the Provost Marshal'—write!"

Bonaparte looked up into Jean Dortan's eyes. He saw no weakness there.

"Write!" growled Jean Dortan, and pressed the blade against Bonaparte's throat so that it seared the skin.

Bonaparte bent his head naively, like a child, to shut out the pain. Jean Dortan gripped his brow and forced the head up. Bonaparte saw those ruthless eyes again, and at their challenge the warrior force of him was roused. This fight was not lost yet, and to the end it should be fought.

He began to write, slowly, painfully:

FRENCH REPUBLIC.

LIBERTY.

EQUALITY.

BONAPARTE, First Consul.

*Headquarters:* Biauville, 16th Prairial. In the 10th year of the French Republic one and indivisible.

*To the PROVOST MARSHAL—*

Give Paul Désaignes and Marie Désaignes, the man and woman arrested this night, to the care of the bearer, Jean Dortan: and this shall be your discharge for them.

BONAPARTE.

Such was the paper Jean Dortan gripped in triumph. He put up his knife, he stared into Bonaparte's eyes, looked long, and the two men's souls spoke together. . . .

"You would have it so, you see," said Jean Dortan.

On Bonaparte's pale brow beads of sweat hung heavy. . . . But his eyes were set and cold.

Jean Dortan swung away and gripped Jerry Wild's arm. "Come! Come away!" he growled.

Jerry Wild, who was a person of more experience, lingered to bind Bonaparte to his camp bed. Then he took Jean Dortan's arm and together they went out, conquerors of the world conqueror.

"What, M. Jean!" the sentry cried, as they passed him in the starlight. "Who is your black friend?"

"One of the Little Corporal's devils," said Jean Dortan cheerily. "Are you not, my friend?"

"By the blue!" said Jerry Wild. "Come, let's ha' done. Faith, it's a dog's life serving your Little Corporal, Jean." So they were gone away to the camp's prison.

Within the tent Bonaparte rocked to and fro in his bonds, straining fiercely, scoring his flesh. With nerves raw in every limb, still he strove on till the light bed frame began to sway under him and he brought it over with a crash. He was beneath it bruised and bleeding, but he writhed desperately and jerked it against the tent pole with a rattling din.

The sentry heard it all and, after a moment's fearful hesitation, plunged in. Then he doubted his eyes. His general, his almighty general, grovelling, gagged, and bound, with his bedstead on his back! He had to wake from stupefaction before he darted forward and slashed the bonds with his bayonet and wrenched out the gag.

"Fool! Imbecile!" so he was thanked. "Accursed rogue! Idiot! Turn out the guard! Away to Berthier! Rouse the 3rd Chasseurs à cheval."

Out ran the sentry, thoroughly scared, and fired his musket as he ran. On the sound the camp rustled to life.

As Jerry Wild went down the hill with Jean Dortan, "And when you have the dears out of prison, what then?" said he.

"I shall find a boat at Wimereux," said Jean Dortan.

"If ever we get as far as Wimereux," said Jerry Wild.

Jerry Wild, in fact, was pensive; a state to which stirring events often reduced that great mind.

They came to the camp prison—it had been a barn the summer before—and, Jerry Wild remaining in a modest obscurity, turned out a yawning officer of the guard. He was presented with the order. His sleepy eyes having contrived to read it, he went off for the Provost Marshal.

The Provost Marshal on arrival showed a sleepy curiosity.

“I dare say it’s right for you to keep the First Consul waiting,” said Jean Dortan; “but I should not like to—just now.”

The Provost Marshal gave orders with alacrity for the prisoners to be brought. Also for a bottle of cognac. “Now, between ourselves, my dear Dortan,” said he, filling the glasses, “what is the Little Man going to do with them?”

“Didn’t he tell you?” said Jean Dortan.

The Provost Marshal examined the order again. “No. That’s what is strange.”

“Perhaps he did not want you to know,” said Jean Dortan innocently.

The Provost Marshal looked hard at Jean Dortan. Then without a word gave him his glass of cognac.

Marie and her brother were led into the room. Marie saw Jean Dortan, and her drawn white face flamed crimson; she grasped at her bosom.

“Will you have a guard?” the Provost Marshal asked. “I’ll manage them,” said Jean Dortan, throwing back his broad shoulders, “I and my friend. Come, my children—*en route*, march!” He thrust them out before

him into the night. He gripped Marie's arm, Jerry Wild Paul's, and dragged them on.

The Provost Marshal beckoned to one of his men. "Just see what he does, Pierre," said he.

Once out of sight of the prison, "Jean!" Marie gasped, "Jean! Is it real? Is it true?"

Jean wheeled sharply to the left, to northward. "True as the starlight! True as the air! True as the morning!"

"Ah, the morning!" she gave a strange sobbing laugh. "The morning—now!" and she hung heavy on his arm.

He bore her on, swiftly, swiftly. . . .

Paul Désaignes was stammering out a host of muddled questions to Jerry Wild, who did not listen. He had his head half turned. "We are being followed," said he in a whisper. "Ah, it is only one man." And then the crack of a musket-shot came rolling down the wind. Two minutes after a bugle cried *réveillé*.

"What does that mean?" muttered Jean Dortan.

"It means," said Jerry Wild, "that your Corsican is an energetic man and we shall never get to Wimereux. Alter course." He wheeled the party round to seaward. "For a two-mile run. There'll be a boat for you if you get there alive." And he shot ahead through the dark.

They were breasting the down, toiling at the close slippery turf, when they heard afar off the clatter of the chasseurs getting to horse, panting and going more slowly, when there came the dull boom of a regiment of galloping hoofs. Upon the crest of the down, hard put to it for breath, they checked an instant perforce, and drank greedily the colder, swifter air. The lights of the English ships, white and red and green, hung like stars in a new



firmament close above the glassy blackness of the sea. "On! on!" cried Jerry Wild, pointing the way. But he himself lay down with his ear to the ground a moment. Clearly and still more clearly he heard the sound of the horses. The chasseurs were striking straight for the sea. "That Corsican is devilishly like the devil," said Jerry Wild, and as he was rising the Provost Marshal's man tumbled over him. Jerry Wild stunned the man neatly with his knife hilt and ran on.

On and on, over the crest of the down they ran, while the boom of the chasseurs grew to a thunder. And now the black vault of the stars was paling overhead and a faint ghostly light touched the dew on grass and twig to a dull garment of pearl. Slipping, sliding, stumbling over juniper bush and the broken turf of the burrows, down hill they went. A tracery of white on the grey beach below marked the verge of the dark sea.

Jerry Wild checked. With all the wind that was in him he whistled:

*Come, all you sailors bold,  
Lend an ear, lend an ear!  
Come all you sailors bold, lend an ear——*

From the sea below rose the answer clear and full:

*It's of our Admiral's fame  
Brave Benbow call'd by name,  
How he fought on the main  
You shall hear, you shall hear.*

In the growing light they saw the dark outline of a

whale-boat lying close in-shore. The chasseurs were over the crest of the hill, and dashing down reckless, yelling, for they had their prey fair in sight. Marie was running feebly, near falling at every step. Jean Dortan and her brother suited their pace to hers and seemed to stand still to be taken.

Jerry Wild crashed across the shingle.

There was an officer standing up in the stern sheets of his boat. "Mr. Wild?" he cried.

"Myself," said Jerry Wild, splashing into the sea and gripping the stern. "Hold on for my young friends."

The lieutenant looked back at the chase without emotion. "Praise God for all and a flowing tide," said he, and then over his shoulder to the bowmen leaning on their boat-hooks, "Stand by."

With the first of the horsemen almost upon them Marie stumbled and fell. Jean Dortan caught her up and plunged on through the shingle. But the chasseur was level with him and swaying for a sword-stroke. The lieutenant rested his pistol on his arm and took a careful shot. Even as he struck the chasseur bent and tumbled limp upon his horse's neck. Jean Dortan, staggering on, flung Marie into the boat. Paul scrambled in by the other thwart. The lieutenant and Jerry Wild together hauled Jean aboard.

"Give way," said the lieutenant placidly, and the oars tore the water and the boat leapt out from the shore.

The chasseurs spurred on yelling and cursing, till the water was on their holsters. With the steady rhythm of the oars was borne back to them this chanty:

*Now farewell to you, ye fine Spanish ladies,  
Now farewell to you, ye ladies of Spain;  
For we've received orders to sail for old England,  
And perhaps we may never more see you again.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Bonaparte came to the sea.

The morning star was flaming white and still above the down. The quiet light of the fore-dawn made world and air and sky all violet blue.

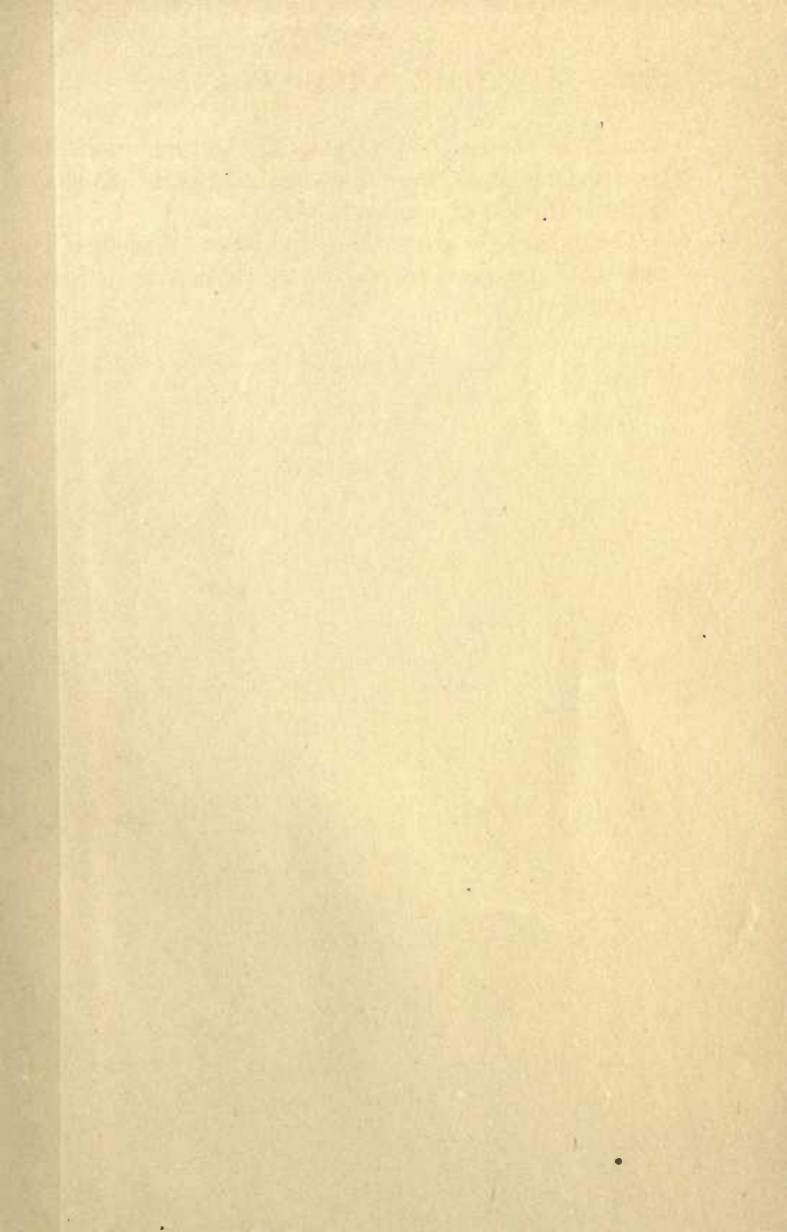
Bonaparte stared out over the dark travingling water to that diminishing boat and the paling lights, the dim canvas of the English ships. The sting of the spray was in his breath. The long shore roared to the flowing tide. . . . Again he felt the ache of impotence. The tireless power of that grim dark water defied him. . . .

He was alone. There was many and many a man would serve him faithfully—serve him to the last. But he had no friend now. The one man after whom he yearned had flung away from him to his enemies. He was bitterly alone. . . . Womanhood called, and the man obeyed, and chose her before all. . . . And they, they two, had conquered. . . . Ay, the world worked for them. They were atune with the world. . . . They scorned what he desired; they wanted what was dust and ashes to him, but the world spirit approved their choice. In them, with them, for them, unseen powers throbbed and toiled. . . . And himself? . . . Higher the tide rose and higher. Flying foam fretted his charger. The dark bosom of the sea beat strong, and a keen dawn wind smote at him. . . . He felt indomitable powers against him. Ay, he who fought for himself only, he was at war with all the

powers of being. They mocked his ambition, they thwarted his plans, they stood against him in marshalled might. He was at war with life. . . .

The dawn light grew strong and clear. A shaft of gold came over the down and the sea awoke in a myriad jewels of laughter.

**THE END.**



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